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ABSTRACT

Selected papers from a conference on language proficiency, policy, and language teacher professionalism include: "Proficiency in Perspective in the Foreign Language Classroom" (Sally Sieloff Magnan); "Teaching Foreign Languages: Policy and the Federal Role" (Paul Simon); "Proficiency in the 'Real World' of the Professional Classroom Teacher" (Lorraine A. Strasheim); "Building Proficiency: Activities for the Four Skills" (Barbara Snyder, Donna R. Long, James R. Kealey, Beverly Marckel); "The Teaching and Testing of Comprehension in Foreign Language Learning" (Elizabeth B. Bernhardt, Charles J. James); "Using Plays Proficiently in the Foreign Language Class" (John M. Purcell); "The VCR Revolution: Feature Films for Language and Cultural Proficiency" (Tom Carr, Janice Duncan); "Foreign Languages in the Middle School: Exploration, Enrollment, Excellence" (Victoria E. Sherer, Jeanine S. Biemel); "The Exploratory Wheel: A Foreign Language Program for the Middle School" (Lael Littlefield, Rafael Grenier); and "Developing a Latin Curriculum for High School" (Alan M. Corn). (MSE)

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Report of Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

Proficiency, Policy, and Professionalism in Foreign Language Education

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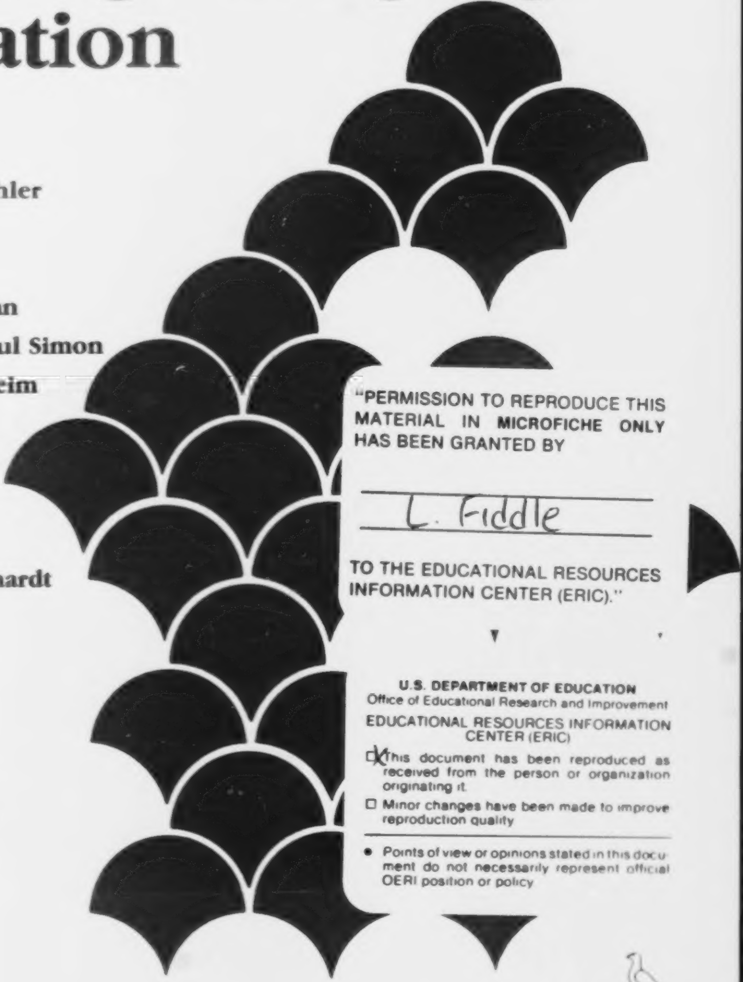

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Proficiency, Policy, and Professionalism in Foreign Language Education

Selected Papers from the 1987 Central States Conference

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Preface

As we near the last decade of the twentieth century, members of the foreign language profession pause to consider the future and to reflect on the past. We find ourselves in the middle of change, buoyed by the excitement of new ideas and, at the same time, bolstered by the knowledge that what we are doing has been effective. We are increasingly active in making decisions that will shape the profession for years to come. The 1987 conference theme, "Foreign Languages: Proficiency, Policy, and Professionalism," reflects three of the major elements of the changes we have undertaken.

Proficiency guidelines establish standards for evaluation that were called for by most of the reports on education published in the early 1980s. We must continue to refine those guidelines and to establish guidelines in areas other than oral proficiency. As we do so, we will continue to respond to the public challenge for quality education.

Foreign language teachers are increasingly active in setting policy at the local, state, and national level. We have taken our message to the public and it has been well received. Certainly, foreign language teachers must continue to be involved in the future of our nation, of our children, and of the profession itself.

Active participation in proficiency and policy have heightened professionalism. Involvement and activity are always keys to improvement. The foreign language professional of today is shaping the future.

The 1987 Conference includes 130 sessions and workshops designed to inform and assist the professional in the most important occupation today: educating the citizen of tomorrow.

Valorie Babb
1987 Program Chair

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Introduction

Diane W. Birckbichler
The Ohio State University

The themes of this year's Central States Conference—proficiency, policy, and professionalism—represent emphases that can and should guide our thinking, our long- and short-term planning, and our day-to-day behavior in the classroom. Proficiency, whether one accepts the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* or another way of measuring language ability, provides a focus for professional development and curricular improvement or innovation. A natural outgrowth of communicative competence, the concept of proficiency adds an assessment component that encourages teachers to think not only about the *process* of language learning and teaching but also about the *product* of language learning. Clearly defined goals for a sequence of instruction, approaches and techniques that facilitate the development of the desired skills, and valid and reliable tests that measure the degree to which that knowledge has been acquired can only improve the teaching/learning process and enhance our image to both students and the public.

Part of our public and private image is also linked to policy matters, those decisions that affect the profession at large and those that influence the day-to-day teaching of foreign languages. Whether the issues are federal funding for language programs or local school board decisions about language curricula, individual teachers need to speak out in favor of the importance of second language and culture study. It is no longer enough to depend solely on the work of professional associations or the goodwill of elected officials. Although the final decisions in such matters are not directly under our control, the ways in which we publicly manifest our concerns, goals, and needs can be.

Being a "professional" in the 1980s is an easier task than in the past ten or fifteen years. Public support for language teaching has increased dramatically; federal agencies, even with cutbacks, are providing funding for language-related programs; and the business community is seeking even closer ties with language professionals. The responsibility for retaining and increasing this support is the professional challenge of the next decade. Pride in what we do as teachers of language and culture will further enhance our collective self-concept. Involvement in policy matters at the local, state, and national level and increasing ties with the private sector will help retain this support. Furthermore, the continued development of proficiency-oriented and communicative curricula will help us deliver to our students what has long been promised to them: the ability to use a foreign language and to understand another culture.

The articles in this volume respond, in a variety of ways, to this challenge. Because of their expertise and the unique perspectives they provide, the authors of the first three chapters in this year's volume were asked to prepare special papers on the three major themes of the conference. Sally Magnan not only provides an excellent overview of the proficiency movement, pointing out its strengths and limitations, but also outlines its applications and potential in terms of approach, design, and procedure. In the second article, the Honorable Paul Simon, Senator from Illinois, continues his articulate support of the importance of language learning in an interdependent world. He further notes recent policy decisions at the federal level and urges teachers to become vocal and active participants in policy making. Lorraine Strasheim has provided foreign language teachers with many cogent and moving articles dealing with what it means to teach foreign languages and cultures realistically and professionally. Her article in this volume is no exception. She places her discussion of professionalism into a proficiency framework, arguing that any definition of proficiency must include a strong and realistic cultural component and that teachers should strive to attain an appropriate balance between learning and acquisitional activities.

In "Building Proficiency: Activities for the Four Skills," Barbara Snyder, Donna R. Long, James R. Kealey, and Beverly Marckel provide both theory and practice to help teachers develop students' proficiency in listening, reading, speaking, and writing. In an article that deals with the teaching and testing of comprehension, Elizabeth B. Bernhardt and Charles R. James provide an excellent description of the comprehension process as it relates to both listening and reading and show how "recall protocols" can be used to assess the students' comprehension of oral and written passages.

John M. Purcell's article, "Using Plays Proficiently in the Foreign Language Class," provides a rationale for including drama in the foreign language curriculum as well as useful and carefully planned approaches that enable students to understand linguistically and aesthetically the plays they read in the foreign language. This same thoughtful attention to sequencing is demonstrated in Tom Carr and Janice Duncan's article, "The VCR Revolution: Feature Films for Language and Cultural Proficiency." Carr and Duncan believe that feature films are an excellent way to develop language proficiency, provided that they are used appropriately and with foreign language students in mind. Videocassettes of foreign language films are becoming more available; Carr and Duncan's previewing, viewing, and postviewing activities will prepare students to understand and appreciate these films, designed originally for a linguistically and culturally competent audience.

With the advent of the middle school concept, foreign language teachers have had to find new ways to teach language and culture to younger students. Victoria E. Sherer and Jeanine S. Biemel describe an interdisciplinary approach to language learning at the middle school level where foreign languages are taught along with science, English, social studies, and mathematics; their article not only focuses on their exploratory language survey course but also includes ways in which enrollments have been built and excellence established. In the program described by Lael Littlefield and Rafael Grenier, foreign languages form one "spoke" in a wheel concept that offers exploration of foreign languages, home economics, industrial arts, and computer literacy.

It is self-evident that proficiency in Latin differs considerably from that of modern languages; but "learning to use" (not just "learning about") language is also an important goal in the Latin curriculum. Alan M. Corn's article provides a detailed outline and description of a carefully articulated four-year course of study in Latin in which the focus is on developing language and cultural proficiency.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to the following people who evaluated the many papers submitted to this year's *Report of the Central States Conference*: Sr. Clarita Anneken, Villa Madonna Academy, Covington, Kentucky; Ilmars Birznieks, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky; Walter Chatfield, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa; Terri Coke, Daviess County High School, Utica, Kentucky; Ronald Eckard, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky; Patricia Finch, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky; Lucia Cayceo Grer, University of Wisconsin at Madison, Madison, Wisconsin; Linda Harlow, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio; Katherine C. Kurk, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, Kentucky; Douglas Lacey, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio; Donna R. Long, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio; Francis Lide, Michigan Technological University, Houghton, Michigan; Mary Sula Linney, Iowa Central Community College, Fort Dodge, Iowa; John Magerus, University of Wisconsin at Lacrosse, Lacrosse, Wisconsin; Beverly Marckel, Olentangy High School, Delaware, Ohio; Moira McCluney, Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa; Lillian Pennington, Patrick Henry High School, Hamler, Ohio; Carol Ragan, Morningside College, Sioux City, Iowa; JoAnn Recker, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio; Lydia I. Ruiz-Coulter, Ottumwa High School, Ottumwa, Iowa; Karen Soukup, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska; Mercedes Stephenson, Hazelwood Central High School, Florissant, Missouri; Suzanne Toliver, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The editor is particularly grateful for the invaluable help of her coeditors who carried out their responsibilities efficiently and competently in spite of the extremely short deadlines that characterize the compilation of this volume. In addition to evaluating each of the forty articles submitted for consideration, David McAlpine organized and coordinated the work of the readers and Elise André provided editorial comments for each of the articles included in this year's report.

1

Proficiency in Perspective in the Foreign Language Classroom

Sally Sieloff Magnan
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Introduction

Interest in proficiency testing is encouraging enthusiastic discussion about refocusing foreign language courses on functional language use. This discussion is reaching administrators, curriculum planners, and material developers, as well as classroom teachers, despite strong warnings that it is premature, if not outright dangerous, to base curricular change on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview testing procedure (OPI) and at least the 1982 provisional version of the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (Bachman and Savignon, 5; Savignon, 49; Van Patten, 58).

This article will examine the present and the potential impact of the OPI and *Guidelines* on classroom teaching and curriculum design, to argue that proficiency-oriented instruction cannot and should not claim to be a new *method* for foreign language teaching. In fact, many teachers find that, although training in proficiency testing does have an immediate and substantial impact on their classroom teaching, from a broader perspective this impact is for the most part neither revolutionary nor unique to a proficiency orientation. Many techniques, and even certain course design features, advocated for proficiency-oriented instruction have been widely discussed with regard to teaching for communicative competence.

There are two notions associated with proficiency-oriented teaching, however, that are highly controversial: the role of error correction in the classroom and the hierarchical ordering of functions, content areas, and structural features in the syllabus. Although proficiency does not provide us with a new and different methodology, experience with proficiency concepts has a major impact on our teaching in that it sensitizes us to differences between what we teach and what our students master for actual use outside our classrooms, an understanding that brings important insights and much enthusiasm and debate to our profession.

Background to the OPI and Proficiency Guidelines

In 1979 the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies (54) urged the foreign language teaching profession to develop a means of evaluating students' ability in foreign language beyond the traditional measures of courses taken and grades received. In response to these calls the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) worked with educators in academia and in the government language schools to restructure the oral interview and related guidelines of government language schools for use in academia (Liskin-Gasparro, 32; Hiple, 23). This effort has given us an oral interview procedure and a set of generic proficiency guidelines in four modalities (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) intended for evaluation of foreign language proficiency of upper high school and university students. In the future, we can expect to see proficiency tests also in reading, listening, and writing, and language-specific guidelines to accompany the generic set (Hiple, 23).

The OPI involves the global rating of a face-to-face conversation between a student and an ACTFL-certified tester; during this ten-to thirty-minute interview the tester provides the student with the opportunity to discuss a number of topics, expressing a variety of functions in the foreign language.

The *Guidelines*, first circulated in provisional form in 1982 (3), were published in revised form in 1986 (2). They offer generic descriptions of typical competencies and patterns of weakness of foreign language uses at each of nine proficiency levels in the four modalities. Like the OPI, they are intended for purposes of evaluation.

The OPI and the *Guidelines* are having a powerful impact in academia. Dandonoli (13) points out that since the first ACTFL/ETS proficiency workshop in 1982, over 1500 individuals have participated in OPI tester workshops sponsored by ACTFL, ETS, or both, and have received training in Arabic, Chinese, ESL, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish, and, through special provisions, in Hindi, Swahili, Hausa, and other less-commonly taught languages. The April 1986 list of ACTFL-certified testers included 101 testers in French, 74 in Spanish, 43 in German, plus testers in other languages.

Indeed, as shown in my recent survey of uses of the OPI in French (Magnan, 36), this test procedure is rapidly becoming a nationally recognized test for use at major points in the curriculum, such as college entrance, completion of college language requirements, and prior to certification as a foreign language teacher. Despite serious concerns over the appropriateness of the OPI procedure and the *ACTFL Provisional Guidelines* too large to be discussed here (Bachman and Savignon, 5; Lantolf and Frawley, 30; Savignon, 49), our profession is clearly moving toward proficiency testing as a means of improving its accountability within academia and beyond.

Proficiency Testing in Our Current National Framework

The demand from legislators and consumers for increased accountability through proficiency testing is certainly not unique to the foreign language discipline. There is a pervasive national concern for higher standards in education, for increasing the literary knowledge, writing skills, and mathematical ability of our students, that is driving us rapidly toward proficiency testing and curriculum renewal. Most noted, perhaps, are the recent Holmes (55) and Carnegie (39) reports that call for more rigorous teacher preparation through requiring a bachelor's degree with heavy concentration on liberal arts and the major field of study plus a subsequent year of work in education and extensive field experience prior to professional teacher certification. When we consider interest in proficiency testing and curriculum renewal in foreign languages as part of a far-reaching national trend toward accountability and improvement in education, we can perhaps understand more clearly the rather ardent desire to look toward proficiency as a new mode of language teaching for the 1980s and beyond.

Current Impact on our Curriculum

The impact of testing for proficiency is now reaching instruction. ACTFL has conducted several programs (for example, those at Middlebury, Pennsylvania State University, Bergen (N.J.) Community College, and North Colorado State University) that extend proficiency concepts to the curriculum (Dandonoli, 14). After experience with oral proficiency testing, Cole and Miller (9), Hirsch (24), and Kaplan (27) have revised course objectives in their respective high school, two-year college, and university level courses. Cummins (12) reports twenty-two states that currently have initiatives underway recommending state or local articulation and/or curriculum proficiency standards and guidelines based in some form on the *Guidelines*. Professional literature offers several volumes devoted to proficiency that discuss curricular implications (Higgs, 21; James, 25; Omaggio, 41), and a methodology text that details proficiency-oriented instruction (Omaggio, 42). It is thus undeniable that concepts from proficiency testing currently extend into classroom teaching.

[illegible]s is not surprising, given the natural desire of teachers to direct their students toward strong performance on important examinations, as long as directed teaching does not compromise the test results (Magnan, 36), and considering that the OPI measures an ability that is currently valued as a goal of instruction—functional oral use of the target language. Nonetheless, many scholars caution against directly applying these principles of proficiency testing to the curriculum, since the OPI and the *Guidelines* are oriented to the product of learning rather than the learning process (Galloway, 15; also, Byrnes, 8; Medley, 37; Schulz, 50). We must remember that the sole express purpose of proficiency testing is to test an outcome, not to prescribe how to teach.

Higgs (20) agrees that notions of proficiency evaluation should not translate into a new "method" of teaching. He suggests, however, that proficiency may offer an "organizing principle" for instruction. As we hear of "a proficiency orientation," "proficiency-oriented approaches," and "proficiency-based instruction" in announcements for workshops, conferences, and textbooks, the differences between "method" and "organizing principle" may seem unclear. Although direct application of the OPI procedure and the *Guidelines* to the classroom is not appropriate, the bottom line is that we may draw implications from the OPI and the *Guidelines* that direct us toward useful innovation in our teaching. These innovations are shaped by our individual needs, desires, and instructional situations through the general theme of promoting language use in context (Galloway, 15).

Three Key Components of a Teaching Method

Building on Anthony's 1963 analysis (4), Richards (43) offers a useful description of how a teaching method is composed of three interrelated components, or levels of organization: approach, design, and procedure. Approach involves the theoretical foundation—the beliefs about the nature of language and language learning that underlie what teachers do to foster learning in their classrooms. Design involves relationships between these theories of language and language learning and the form and function of instructional materials and activities. The level of procedure includes day-to-day classroom techniques and practices and the use of time, space, and equipment to implement these practices. The three components—approach, design, and procedure—need not be developed in any specific order. Rather, a method may begin to be formulated on any of the three levels and then be extended to the other two through the natural interrelationship among the components.

At present, the influence of proficiency on the curriculum is basically limited to the levels of procedure and design. Before implications can be justly extended to the level of approach as well, considerable empirical research is needed.

Teaching for Proficiency: On the Level of Procedure

It is on the level of procedure, the day-to-day teacher practices, classroom activities, and use of resources, that we actually put into practice notions from proficiency testing. These adaptations are often directly related to experience with the OPI and thus deal primarily with speaking and, to a lesser extent, listening. As Byrnes (8) points out, teachers who observe numerous oral proficiency interviews become more conscious of how students perform in a foreign language in a nonclassroom situation. When teachers become sensitized in a new way to the results of their teaching, they naturally think of ways to adapt their teaching in hopes of helping students perform even better. Furthermore, when teacher-testers experience tactics and activities that encourage good student performance in the testing situation, they naturally hope that similar tactics and activities will promote equally good results in the classroom. Thus, as teachers are taught to be testers, there is a natural tendency for them to use what they have learned to become better teachers.

Teacher Tactics

1. Normal Rate of Speech. Testers typically speak at a fairly normal rate and do not limit their vocabulary and structures to fit a particular curriculum. Comprehension is ensured through repetition and rephrasing, as necessary. Following experience with the OPI, teachers become more acutely aware of the vast difference between students' ability to speak and their ability to understand. They thus worry less often about speaking slowly and limiting their language to the productive level of their students' language.

In discussing the impact of proficiency notions on the classroom, Bragger (6) similarly suggests that, when communicating with students in skill-using activities, teachers should generally maintain a normal rate of speech provided that students can understand the general message. Such practice, of course, concurs with techniques of Krashen's and Terrell's Natural Approach (28), which advocates acquisition through extensive comprehensible input: exposing students to a great variety of words and structures at a level slightly above the students' own level of competence ($i + 1$), provided that the message is comprehensible.

2. Longer Wait Time. In order to encourage students to work through linguistic difficulties to express their own thoughts and to speak at length, testers give students considerable time to formulate what they want to say in response to each question. Testers generally tend not to hurry or help students by repeating the questions several times, offering words, or finishing phrases, but rather wait out the silence—asking another question only when it becomes obvious the student cannot say anything more on the topic. Through this longer struggle to put thoughts into words, many students often produce more complex and creative answers than they typically would during rapid-paced classroom questioning.

Bragger (6) and Galloway (15) suggest that students would benefit from a similar practice in the classroom. Language learning research indicates that the wait time in our classes may be too short. Shrum (52) found the mean time between teacher question and student response in first-year Spanish and French classes to be only 1.9 seconds. White and Lightbown (60) had similar findings with ESL classes, showing the average wait time to be an inadequate 2.1 seconds. In contrast to this harsh reality, Shrum cites research by Rowe (46) and Craik and Lockhart (11) to suggest a wait time over five seconds, and White and Lightbown suggest five to ten seconds. To date there has been no such measurement of how long testers wait for answers in the OPI, but testers often comment that it feels like a very long time, much longer than they typically wait in class.

3. **Longer Response Time.** In addition to having a longer wait time before students begin their answers, experience with the OPI encourages longer response time for students to complete their answers. OPI testers tend not to interrupt students, be it to encourage them with a well-used "good," to correct the accuracy of the utterance, or to help them by supplying or modeling expressions. Instead, OPI testers encourage students to pursue the communication by making short, meaningful comments such as "Really?" "I see," or "Tell me more." The natural response of the tester who is reacting to content rather than form is usually met by a natural response from the student who chooses to communicate in either partial sentences or chunks of sentences, rather than in single, complete sentences.

4. **Minimal Correction in "Free" Communication.** As already mentioned, testers are instructed not to correct students during the OPI interview, whether through overt correction or more subtle remodeling of the proper form. Direct application of this principle to the classroom

should encourage activities without external concern for accuracy imposed by the teacher.

It is interesting to note, however, that teaching for proficiency has been associated with insistence on a high degree of grammatical correctness. Bachman and Savignon (5), Savignon (49), and Van Patten (58) express concern that advocates of proficiency have a dangerous preoccupation with grammatical correctness that is not supported by research in second-language acquisition and that is in conflict with notions of teaching for communicative competence. This preoccupation stems from Higgs and Clifford's (22) belief that uncorrected errors will become fossilized, thereby making it difficult, if not impossible, for students to attain superior proficiency. Citing Higgs and Clifford, Omaggio (42, p. 273) states in her third hypothesis for proficiency-oriented teaching that "there should be a concern for the development of linguistic accuracy from the beginning of instruction."

It is quite clear from the rating scale for the OPI and from the ACTFL *Guidelines* that superior speakers must have the grammar of the language well under control, i.e., they may have no patterns of error in basic grammatical structures. This absolute criterion of grammatical accuracy is not, however, found at the lower proficiency levels, where weaknesses in grammatical accuracy can be more easily compensated for by strengths in other areas, such as extensive vocabulary and, especially, the ability to communicate successfully on a range of topics. The argument that accuracy should be a major concern for the classroom is aimed, then, at preparing students to attain superior speaking ability, a level beyond the reach of our undergraduate majors (Magnan, 36).

There are, then, several key questions. Should we teach toward a goal of superior speaking ability? If we do desire to teach toward superior ability, is rigorous correction a must throughout the curriculum, since grammatical control is ultimately required, or will grammatical control perhaps develop better through attention to the message rather than to the form of the utterance? If we do decide to place strong emphasis on grammatical form in our classrooms, will we be discouraging the development of the communicative ability that we hope to foster?

Research in learner interlanguage since the early 1970s finds learner errors to be a natural and necessary part of the hypothesis-testing process that leads learners to the ability to communicate effectively (for overview, see Richards, 44). Strategies for communicative teaching (Savignon, 47 and 48) thus deemphasize the importance that audio-lingualism placed on grammatical accuracy in order to encourage freedom for students to experiment with communication and thereby increase their ability to speak at more length and impart more information.

The role that grammatical accuracy should play in a proficiency-oriented classroom is, in reality, a question of proportion and balance: how often should we place our students in a risk-taking, communicative situation where errors are likely to occur; and when errors do occur, how much, when, and how are we to correct them? In describing teaching from the perspective of proficiency, Galloway (15) suggests moderate risk-taking as optimal. Omaggio (42) agrees, seeing the sequence of exercises as crucial in preparing students to enter into communicative activities with less risk of errors. Bragger (6) refers to Rivers's (45) distinction between skill-getting activities and skill-using activities and suggests a similar emphasis on correction in early skill-getting stages and less or no teacher intervention later in creative skill-using activities. It would seem, then, that a proficiency orientation suggests a sequence of activities from the highly structured with rigorous correction to the more open-ended with less teacher intervention. It is, then, the latter communicative activities where, as in the OPI, minimizing teacher correction is advisable in order to promote extended communication.

Such careful attention to when to correct classroom errors in order to achieve an appropriate balance between attention to form and attention to meaning is certainly not restricted to a proficiency orientation. I, among others, have suggested such a hierarchy for correction as good judgment in communicative teaching (Magnan, 34). It remains an unanswered question, however, to what degree advocates of proficiency-oriented teaching and advocates of communicative teaching agree or disagree on the issue of error correction from the practical standpoint of day-to-day implementation in their classrooms. In fact, if we entered many so-called "proficiency-oriented" and "communicative" classrooms and studied error-correction techniques, we would likely find overlapping ranges of frequency of risk-taking activities and overt attention to correct grammatical form. Proficiency-oriented teaching has indeed been associated with rigor in grammatical correctness, but this concern for accuracy at upper proficiency levels should be seen as neither absolute nor so pervasive that it limits communicative language use in lower-level classes.

Classroom Activities

As teachers have found that elicitation tactics used in the OPI can also be useful teacher tactics for their classrooms, they have also found that tasks from the OPI offer valuable sources of classroom learning activities.

1. **Listing.** The main novice-level functions are listing and naming. Once the pressure is off to have students always answer in complete sentences, it is easy to devise activities in which beginning students create lists: of things to buy, of jobs to do, of items in their room, of favorite weekend activities. More advanced students can make lists in order to organize their thoughts and select vocabulary prior to doing more difficult tasks, such as narrating, describing, comparing, and explaining.
2. **Role-Play.** A situation or role-play, in which students ad-lib an interaction that might occur in the target culture, is a mandatory component of the OPI for intermediate speakers and an optional component for advanced and superior speakers. Indeed, teachers find the role-plays highly versatile, practical, and motivating tools for pair and small-group work, and textbooks use them as summation activities to integrate structural, lexical, and cultural notions for functional practice.

Doing role-plays or short sketches on topics of personal and cultural interest is, again, not new to a proficiency orientation. Zelson (62), for example, demonstrated the value of such interactions for developing communicative ability. What the proficiency framework brings to the role-plays is insight on what makes some situations easier or more difficult than others, through imposition of a hierarchy of performance tasks, which range from asking and answering questions in an uncomplicated tourist-type interaction (intermediate level), to explaining at some length in a similar situation but with a complication (advanced level), to persuading, arguing, or demanding in a situation that extends beyond daily social interaction to professional or unfamiliar areas (superior level).

3. Paraphrase and Circumlocution. OPI testers consider lacunae in vocabulary as opportunities for students to demonstrate ability to paraphrase and use circumlocution. Teachers who work with the OPI thus become highly sensitive to the communicative benefits of these techniques. In their classroom, they systematically have students offer paraphrases or circumlocutions for unknown vocabulary and do exercises to practice these communicative strategies (Galloway, 15).

4. Retelling Stories and Debating Issues. These two activities, common during OPI testing on the advanced and superior levels, respectively, are mentioned by Bragger (6) as techniques to be practiced in the proficiency-oriented classroom. Such activities are certainly not new, yet teachers experienced in OPI testing often give them an increased and different focus in their classrooms. Kaplan (27) suggests that asking students to describe a scene or tell a story is not enough. Students need to be taught *how* to describe and *how* to sequence events in narration.

5. Oral Achievement Testing. An increase in oral classroom activities, with a concomitant course objective regarding speaking ability, leads naturally to requiring students to take oral as well as written tests for evaluation of course work. The OPI itself, however, is highly inappropriate as a grading instrument, since it is a test of proficiency, rather than of achievement, whose scope cannot be limited to material covered in any particular course or sequence of courses. Furthermore, the global nature of its rating makes it unlikely for students within the same class to receive scores that adequately distinguish their mastery of course features.

Nonetheless, teachers can create oral classroom tests based on activities used in the OPI and can even analyze the components of the global OPI rating to develop their own classroom grading scale (Magnan, 35), or they can select and adapt from oral testing models offered previously within a framework of communicative testing (for example, Linder, 31). What is essential is that speaking tests be included in the curriculum and that these tests correspond to real-life tasks, to the daily challenges faced outside the classroom (Galloway, 15).

Briefly, then, on the level of procedure, teaching for proficiency means using tactics and techniques that encourage communication. The rhythm of the class varies, from mechanical drills with heavy correction to interactive role-play, monologues of substantial length, and personalized communicative activities in which students take time to formulate and complete substantial answers and teachers impose their teacher presence less. Apart from disagreement on the importance of grammatical accuracy, teaching for proficiency and teaching for communicative competence share remarkable similarities at the level of procedure.

A Note on Listening, Reading, and Writing

It would be unjust to give the impression that a proficiency orientation is concerned only with speaking, even at present when the speaking skill dominates through influence of the OPI. Many teachers extrapolate from experiences with OPI, through the aid of the *Guidelines* in the other skills areas, to develop new procedures and adapt old ones for teaching listening, reading, and writing. These techniques tend to favor process rather than product, including priming activities that prepare students for the actual task of listening, reading, or writing, interactive work throughout the main teaching module, and a follow-up phase involving peer checking and/or personal reactions (for examples, see Omaggio, 42).

Teaching for Proficiency: On the Level of Design

As at the level of procedure, we find similarities between proficiency-oriented teaching and communicative teaching, particularly concerning the roles of learner, teacher, and materials. One issue, however, is particularly controversial: the notion of a hierarchy of tasks based on the *Guidelines* to be used to develop course objectives and related course syllabuses. At the level of design, the *Guidelines* offer more impact on the curriculum than does OPI procedure. Thus, impact at this level tends to involve all four skills, rather than to focus mainly on speaking. For lack of instructional materials, however, relatively few of these suggestions have as yet been put into practice. Nonetheless, their implications are far-reaching and need to be supported by research at the level of approach, that is, research into how foreign languages are learned.

1. **Objectives and the Syllabus.** Proficiency clearly refers to how well

students can put their language skills to use: how well they can function in a target community. Thus the primary objective of a proficiency orientation is to build students' ability to use language in authentic contexts (Omaggio, 42).

More controversial is the suggestion that the *Guidelines* offer a hierarchy of functions and contexts that can be used to create specific functional objectives across sequences of courses. Omaggio (42, p. 35) states:

> The guidelines are [. . .] ideally suited for organizing instruction because they are progressive in nature. Knowing what kinds of competencies lie at the *next* level will help us sequence materials and choose activities.

It is thus mainly in this sense of ordering linguistic functions and content that proficiency is offered as an "organizing principle" for instruction, a notion with which several scholars strongly take issue (Bachman and Savignon, 5; Lantolf and Frawley, 30; Savignon, 49; Van Patten, 58).

The government forerunners of the ACTFL *Guidelines* were created from observation of American government workers attempting to use foreign languages in Europe. Since the *Guidelines* are based on synchronic observational data and not longitudinal, developmental data, it may be dangerous to assume that the hierarchy of functions, content, and accuracy features found in the level descriptions of the *Guidelines* parallels the natural order of acquisition of these features.

We are indeed making a developmental claim when we suggest that it is easier or more natural for students to learn to list and memorize (novice level), before they learn to recombine memorized elements into novel utterances to create with language (intermediate level), or to create with language well in present time before they consistently construct coherent, lengthy narratives about concrete events in present, past, and future time (advanced level), and finally sustain extended support, opinion, and hypothesis statements concerning abstract notions (superior level). We may very well be making a major mistake if we teach for absolute control of functions and contents described at a particular proficiency level before we move on to functions and contents of the next proficiency level. In fact, Omaggio (42) advises against such a lock-step approach, preferring that we occasionally introduce material from slightly higher proficiency ranges in order to prepare students for progress up the proficiency scale.

The practice of tailoring course material to proficiency level is complicated by the interaction of the four skills. If, as we generally believe, students naturally progress more rapidly in the receptive skills, listening and reading, than in the productive skills, speaking and writing, we should perhaps think in terms of different syllabuses for each skill or pair of skills that we follow concurrently with our students. Galloway (15), in fact, refines Omaggio's notion of introducing material from slightly higher proficiency levels to suggest teaching at higher levels in listening and reading than in speaking and writing so that students first acquire vocabulary and structure for recognition and then, on a subsequent learning cycle, bring these recognition skills into productive use. The question of the degree, if any, to which we should sequence our course objectives according to the hierarchy of function and content presented in the *Guidelines* needs to be substantiated by empirical research data.

Perhaps because, as Valdman (56) points out, speech acts and linguistic functions have no inherent order, the literature concerning proficiency-oriented instruction tends to discuss how to use a grammar-based syllabus to build functional skills (Omaggio, 42; Galloway, 15). Grammar does offer some logical notion of task hierarchy, but the use of a grammar-based syllabus is problematic in a course whose primary focus is functional practice, since as Genesee (16) observes we cannot yet match specific linguistic structures with specific language functions. Furthermore, grammar-based syllabuses are generally associated with teaching for conceptual knowledge rather than functional use and with covering a rather large amount of material in a comparatively short period of time.

Advocates of proficiency-oriented instruction frequently comment on how to alter expectations when teaching for functional language use with a grammar-based syllabus. Heilenman and Kaplan (18) and Galloway (15) wisely insist on the difference between material that is taught and material that is learned, used, and internalized. This leads Heilenman and Kaplan to propose the notion of different levels of control (full, partial, and conceptual) to be expected at different points in the course syllabus. They explain that a cyclical syllabus, proposed by Corder (10) in 1973, allows students to reexperience structural, as well as semantic and functional features, in a systematic fashion, deepening their mastery of them with each exposure and promoting development from one proficiency level to the next in a spiral fashion. A cyclical syllabus also maximizes the tendency noted earlier for students to be at higher proficiency level in listening and reading than in speaking and writing, promoting acquisition in listening and reading during early instructional phases and acquisition in speaking and writing during later phases.

A cyclical syllabus also responds to the observation that in any given class there is a range of student ability that overlaps with the ranges found in both the preceding and the subsequent level (Magnan, 36). As students generally do not demonstrate equal levels of proficiency in all four modalities, students in the same class do not demonstrate equal levels of proficiency in any one skill. Clearly, a syllabus that incorporates spiraling cycles of presentation, review, and expansion responds well to this diversity.

The issue of time devoted to covering certain material, especially the traditional first-year college or two-year high school grammar sequence, is central to notions of teaching for proficiency. A well-developed cyclical syllabus that encourages separate, yet related, development of the four skills for functional use demands more time to teach than a linear syllabus that emphasizes conceptual control with similar expectations in each skill. This observation has, of course, already been made, rather convincingly, by advocates of communicative teaching (Valdman and Warriner-Burke, 57). Advocates of proficiency renew the cry to spread out "introductory" grammar over a longer instructional sequence. Fortunately, we are beginning to see some favorable response to this time-grammar dilemma. The new Wisconsin foreign language curriculum guide for secondary teaching (17), for example, based in part on the ACTFL *Guidelines*, advocates that more time be devoted to the initial grammar sequence.

The corollary to reducing the grammar scope of first- and second-year classes is naturally to include more grammar, or other language study, in upper-level classes. Galloway (15, p. 56) puts it well: "Proficiency-based decisions regarding grammar scope must be geared to reducing where there is overestimation, enriching where there is underestimation, and sequencing for use." If we include less grammar in introductory courses, we should have more time to develop the four skills, thereby bringing listening and reading more in line with speaking and writing. The bridge to intermediate courses, with traditional emphasis on reading and writing, would then be smoother: both introductory and intermediate courses would emphasize all four skills fairly equally with the study of grammar running through them at a slower, more even pace. Such curriculum planning would help guard against a potentially unfavorable extremist influence that enthusiasm for oral proficiency might have on our curriculum and encourage instead more systematic development of all four skills (Schulz, 50; Herron, 19). In a publication by the College Board (1), we are indeed encouraged to guard against a schism between language and literature courses. A four-skills proficiency orientation encourages us to work more language into literature courses and more literature into language courses to find a more appropriate balance in our overall curriculum.

Finally, we must recognize and act upon the fact that if students are to attain superior proficiency, especially in the productive skills, our sequence of courses needs to include a substantial period of study abroad (Bragger, 6). During this time in the target community, the linguistic features that students had mastered for partial control in the classroom would develop into full control.

2. Role of the Learner. In a proficiency framework, as in a communicative one, the learner is to be a performer, an initiator, a problem-solver—a user of language. Citing Nerenz and Knop's (40) study on the effect of group size on students' opportunities to use language, Galloway (15) advises that students work in pairs and small groups, interacting to solve problems and exchange information in the target language.

Thus the role of learners in a proficiency orientation echoes that in a communicative approach as described by Breen and Candlin (7): negotiators between the self and the learning-process who contribute as much as they gain and thereby learn in an independent way. Self-directed learning, with guidance, is indeed appropriate for a classroom in which ranges of proficiency for different students and different skills are recognized and supported.

3. Role of the Teacher. A proficiency orientation tends to view the teacher as guide, catalyst, diagnostician, and consultant. Cole and Miller (9), who reworked their entire high school program on principles of proficiency, offer two guiding principles for teachers: ensure maximum student involvement and incorporate the maximum variety of activities in a class period.

Yet, the notions of imparting grammar rules, be it through deductive or inductive means, and of error correction by the teacher also suggest a teacher-directed classroom, at least in certain portions of each lesson. It seems, then, that we return to a rather eclectic view of the role of the teacher who assumes different roles in accordance with the different objectives of each part of the lesson.

4. Instructional Materials. Advocates of proficiency-oriented and communicative teaching alike call for the use of authentic materials—written texts, recordings, visuals that are rich in the culture of the target community. Although the cultural component of the 1982 *Provisional Guidelines* (3) was not retained in the 1986 version (2), cultural knowledge and sensitivity remain important in frameworks for proficiency-based teaching (Galloway, 15; Omaggio; 42; and Bragger, 6). Ideally, a proficiency-oriented framework should take into account Strasheim's (53) declaration: Foreign language skills provide the medium of instruction and culture is the message. Culture here should be considered in its broadest sense, including knowledge of sociopolitical, historical and contemporary facts, daily life and tourist situations, and an understanding and appreciation of literary and artistic heritage.

Obviously, such materials do not exist. In fact, considering the uncertainty about the framework of the syllabus, they are not yet even clearly defined. As Walz (59) illustrates, most textbooks today are organized around grammatical structures from a written point of view. They tend to teach about language as much as, if not more than, they show how language is used, in either spoken or written form. Culture and literature are most often included as "extras" in cultural notes and readings at the end of chapters. To truly implement the design component of any eventual method of teaching for proficiency, we would need extensive development of instructional material.

Teaching for Proficiency: At the Level of Approach

Proficiency-oriented instruction cannot be described at the level of approach, since the OPI and the *Guidelines* are not aligned with a coherent, tested theory of language and second-language learning. As Lalande (29) recalls, the curricular models based on proficiency are derived from data, rather than from theory.

Richards (43) explains that at least three different theoretical views of language underlie current popular language teaching methods: structural, functional, and interactional. At the levels of design and procedure, a proficiency-orientation borrows from all three: structural in its currently accepted syllabus and perhaps in its attention to accuracy; functional in its emphasis on conveying meaning and on natural language usage in situation; and interactional in certain activities and definition of the roles of learner and teacher that promote communicative exchange. For now, then, proficiency-oriented teaching can make claims only at the levels of procedure and design. Serious research relating the development of principles of proficiency to second-language acquisition theory are clearly needed before proficiency-oriented teaching can be defined on the level of approach, and thus be considered a "method" in the full sense.

In this regard, we find a striking contrast between proficiency-oriented teaching and communicative teaching—which has, according to Richards (43), been developed on all three levels: initially at the level of approach in the late 1970s/early 1980s (Wilkins; 61; Breen and Candlin, 7), and then at the levels of design (Munby, 38) and procedure (Littlewood, 33; Johnson, 26).

Conclusion: The Reality and Hopes of Proficiency

What, then, does proficiency offer the classroom teacher, if not a unified method for foreign language teaching? Primarily, proficiency offers an oral testing procedure and eventually a testing program in all four skills. This multi-skill evaluation program is crucial, for, as Byrnes (8) explains, it will furnish us from the start with an evaluation measure against which claims for teaching can be compared. Information from this testing program will help us establish realistic expectations for our students at each level of instruction, helping us to guard against promising unrealistic achievements in limited foreign language learning experiences (Schulz, 51).

With regard to teaching, experience with proficiency concepts improves our ability to observe language use in a critical way and, through our observations, pushes us to direct our classrooms toward purposeful communication in all four modalities. Our classrooms tend to welcome eclecticism in a communicative vein, with choices of techniques and materials dependent upon on our personal styles as teachers and the interests and needs of our students. Perhaps this is why proficiency-oriented teaching is so attractive to many of us. It embodies and builds on ideas from a variety of teaching approaches, including especially communicative teaching, that we have used successfully in whole or in part. As Heilenman and Kaplan (18) rightly insist, a proficiency-based curriculum starts with outcomes; it does not prescribe practices.

Most importantly perhaps, proficiency brings us to a common dialogue, leading us to reflect upon and debate issues in the theory and practice of second-language learning and teaching. This dialogue is indeed rich and extends beyond European languages to include a range of African and Asian languages as well. Heilenman and Kaplan (18, p. 73) suggest that "proficiency, as an organizing principle, represents the first serious attempt at professional unity since the days of NDEA institutes and the comforting security of audiolingualism." The value of this enthusiasm and the potential richness of this dialogue are not to be underestimated. Through this dialogue we are bound to experience an enlightened perspective on foreign language learning and teaching.

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Teaching Foreign Languages: Policy and the Federal Role

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U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities

At first glance, Washington, D.C., appears a long way from elementary, secondary, and college classrooms. With a national expenditure of $250 billion on education, $17 billion in federal funds for education is an extremely modest contribution, and that contribution is focused on special issues and special populations.

Familiar federal programs target dollars through Chapter I funding for the disadvantaged and student aid for college and university tuition. The federal commitment generally falls into the categories of providing equal access and equal opportunity, rather than support for specific disciplines, techniques, and studies that may be underfunded at the state and local level. Federal education budget targeting with its low priority for specialized academic disciplines and techniques is a reality. Just as real is a growing interest at the national level in encouraging support for particular fields of study.

Focused support is not new, although it has traditionally been modest and cyclical. At the end of the 1950s, Congress appropriated funds for the National Defense Student Loan Program to encourage postsecondary study of mathematics and science. In 1964, Congress created the National Foundation for the Arts and the Humanities to offer support for institutions and individuals studying, performing, and writing in these disciplines. The National Science Foundation has long given fellowships for advanced study in mathematics, engineering, the physical and natural sciences, and behavioral sciences.

A national consciousness of need and utility has usually driven the creation of programs of support for distinct disciplines in education. Since 1975, my first year in Congress, I have pushed to raise the federal consciousness of the critical need to assist the teaching and learning of foreign languages at all levels of education. Over the last decade, national government has responded slowly. We now have a healthy system of specialized language and area resource centers at over ninety colleges and universities in this nation, funded through Title 6 of the Higher Education Act. The number of students served is small and the purpose is limited, but the goal of supporting study of all areas and languages on this globe has been reached. For the business community and general population, however, these centers have an indirect effect. There has been some strengthening of academic resources at the host postsecondary institutions; however, undergraduates are not routinely served, students in fields such as teacher education are not served, and resources are not readily available to the secondary school teacher or the secondary school student.

The U.S. Department of Education has a small program that assists local school districts in the development of innovative foreign language programs. It is a new initiative and we have no information on its success as yet. It is a start, however, and the $1.3 million appropriated annually for the program is $1.3 million more than we have ever had before through a federal department.

The newly reauthorized Higher Education Act provides for summer institutes of intensive foreign language programs and a new initiative to support exemplary demonstration programs in language at colleges and universities. I hope that we will see a foreign language component in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization, which will be enacted in 1987. Federal resources, limited as they may be, should and *can* be used in this critical area.

Independent federal cultural agencies have begun looking at internalization of their program, and in 1985, the National Endowment for the Humanities announced a concentration through their Education Division that invites schools at all levels to apply for assistance for programs on international education with foreign language instruction acknowledged as a necessary portal through which a student must pass. Several million dollars could be committed to this program, depending on the number and quality of applications. Again it is a small start, but significant because it is a new initiative based on a recent and growing interest in and understanding of the importance of our internationalized economy and society.

At the writing of this article, there is bad news also. The Fulbright Exchange Program faces a possible cut of 25 percent in appropriations for the coming year. Rather than a comment on the program itself, it is a clear indication of the fiscal pullback in all programs at the federal level. It is in this context that we should consider the new programs previously mentioned, and their importance increases when we realize that the odds were against their creation and funding.

There is no need to belabor the point that an internationalized economy and society require the understanding of other languages and cultures. Horror stories of marketing mistakes in other nations and technical competition abound in the news daily. In addition, the scope of international trade and marketing is immense:

- The thirteen largest banks in the U.S. derive almost half their total earnings from overseas credits.
- American business depends on international trade for 30 percent of its profits and 40 percent of our farmland produces for export.
- A recent study by the Southern Conference of Governors estimates that 80 percent of U.S. businesses that could be exporting are not.
- Forty-three percent of U.S. patents issued in 1985 went to non-U.S. companies and individuals.

On the plus side, many in the business community, state and local education agencies, and Congress see a need for foreign-language-related services. For example, Congress recently approved legislation to provide for the translation of various foreign technical periodicals to ensure that our manufacturing and technological industries are aware of what is going on around us. Congress is providing funds because there is a need, a need that is not met by language-competent members of the business community.

We cannot help but learn about the relationship between language and business when a Japanese official commented that a $2 billion investment in a Mitsubishi plant in Illinois was decided, in small part, because the local high school taught Japanese.

Our missteps and our lack of competitiveness have not always translated into corrective actions in education. The push in this case would be from the top down—those businesses who need to hire language-competent employees will look to the schools. And students who want to work in any number of occupations will see that language training gives them an edge in the job market. Perhaps this could be called the capitalistic theory of language study. Examples of Chase Manhattan Bank recruiting at language schools rather than business schools, and the employability of the recent class of Wharton School graduates who were double majors in business and language suggest that it is working, however slowly.

In addition to the business pressure on education, colleges and universities can also encourage more language training at the elementary and secondary level. Increased entrance requirements in foreign language study would quickly translate into a school board providing courses that enable students to meet these requirements. This also is becoming a reality. In the next two years, admission to the California State University system will require two years of foreign language study. In the most recent year reviewed, seventy-six colleges *added* language requirements for entrance at a time when the number of students in the eighteen-year-old pool of applicants has decreased. However, less than one in ten colleges and universities requires foreign language study for admission.

It is unclear which came first—lowered language requirements for college admission or fewer students applying to college having taken languages in elementary and secondary school. The important point is that in many state systems and private colleges we are seeing a slow turnabout. The change is slow because of where we are now.

Only 4 percent of high school graduates have had four or more semesters of a foreign language. Only 14 percent of all students entering colleges have had such training. Once in college, requirements for graduation vary widely, with language an inconsistent requirement often based on a student's choice of a major. Computer language can be substituted in many cases for a foreign language, and most academic majors do not require any language at all. We are the only nation in the world where one can earn a doctoral degree with *no* language training at all.

The standard liberal arts curriculum, which had been a tradition in U.S. postsecondary education, is no longer the dominant curriculum, and currently less than one million postsecondary students are taking any language at all—with over 67 percent of those students taking entry-level French or Spanish. Of those taking a language, 1.3 percent are learning Chinese, 3.1 percent study Russian, 0.3 percent study Arabic and 1.6 percent study Japanese. To put this into a global context, over 10,000 Japanese businessmen speak English while only 100 U.S. businessmen speak Japanese. There are more teachers of English in the Soviet Union than students of Russian in the United States. European high school students often have taken four to twelve years of two and three languages. Botswana requires more language study by the fourth grade than the typical American school system requires by the end of high school.

It is not economics alone or the achievements of other nations that should be driving our interest in foreign language study. In the area of diplomacy, we are also at a distinct disadvantage when Embassy personnel are unable to understand the languages of host countries. The inability of most Embassy personnel to speak Farsi prior to the Iranian revolution precluded defensive measures that might have avoided the hostage situation. There is no guarantee this problem could have been avoided, but there is no doubt that almost all U.S. diplomatic personnel were unable to gauge the activism and intentions of the Iranian peoples other than through official, and often misleading, channels.

I have given a brief overview of our current status, and the beginnings of change in foreign language study. It is you, the teachers of foreign language, who will be expected to remedy problems that are not of your creation. There is no doubt in my mind, however, that you can remedy the situation by acknowledging the importance of your disciplines and supporting changing language requirements at all levels of education.

This is especially true in light of the following data. Only 10 percent of teachers currently working in elementary and secondary classrooms were ever exposed to international topics while in school. The number competent in foreign languages is even smaller. Statistics for college-level instructors have not been collected but are similar to the numbers for pre-college teachers.

As foreign language teachers, you are members of an elite profession, and we as a nation must draw on your skill, dedication, and commitment in order to educate young people in languages and provide for them an international perspective. Yet your profession needs to stand up and be proud. Foreign language teachers need to be believers and take a stand. It is difficult to convince those in Washington to be supportive of foreign language issues if foreign language teachers do not send the message that their discipline is important and that our country will be better off with students who know a language and have a broad global perspective.

If we do not, we have everything to lose and nothing to gain.

3

Proficiency in the "Real World" of the Professional Classroom Teacher

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Change Changes—One More Time

These are heady times in foreign language education in the United States. Although foreign languages have historically been elective in American schools, state departments of education/public instruction and school districts across the country are beginning to require some language study of some or all students. Schools that have never offered foreign languages are adding them to their curricula. Existing programs are being expanded to include Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Russian. Enrollments are up, despite the decline in the total student population, and attrition rates are edging downward. Yet less than ten years ago, teachers were turning to eclectic teaching approaches in what was to become a decade of "innovative overchoice" (Lafayette, 13) as they fought to arrest plummeting enrollment and escalating attrition rates.

Even more amazing is the fact that the acquisition of second-language skills—as late as the seventies deemed a "frill" or fit study for only the college-bound—is being linked to the capabilities of the United States to retain its leadership role in world affairs and to stabilize its economy through more culturally enlightened international trade. And it is not just foreign language teachers doing the linking! As Hoegl (9, pp. 282–83) has indicated,

> International trade now accounts for 25 percent of our gross national product. Forty percent of U.S. farmland produces for export, and 20 percent of

> U.S. industrial output is sold abroad. Altogether one in five Americans depends on international trade for employment.

One critical lesson American foreign language teachers have learned in this century is that policy is very much dictated by world events. Two World Wars, Sputnik and the space race, and now global interdependence have dramatically altered the course of second-language education in this country. *Keeping informed on national and world events is as much a part of our professional preparation as in-service workshops.*

Is the "Impossible Dream" Coming True?

The most recent changes in foreign language education have been engendered as much by forces outside the profession as by those within it. The thrust toward excellence in education stimulated by a series of national assessments of schooling in the 1980s has certainly been a major factor, for it has captured first the media, then public attention.

The earliest of these assessments was contributed by the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies in 1979 (22). Entitled *Strength through Wisdom*, the Commission's report stressed the need for young Americans who could "communicate with our neighbors in their own languages and cultural contexts" (p. 28) and the need for establishment of standards of proficiency. As a direct result of the Commission's recommendations, *The ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines* (3) emerged in the fall of 1982. The *Guidelines*, which are not tied to levels of instruction, described proficiency levels in five areas: speaking, listening, reading, writing, and culture. The first step toward a "proficiency movement" has been taken. The biggest contribution these *Guidelines* made was to raise the profession's consciousness and to focus attention on the concept—and the issue—of proficiency.

By mid 1983 a series of national assessments of schooling favoring extended sequences of study and the attainment of proficiency were thrust upon the public consciousness by the media. The National Commission on Excellence in Education, for example, conceding in *A Nation at Risk* (17, pp. 25–26) that "achieving proficiency in a foreign language ordinarily requires from four to six years of study," goes on to say that it is desirable that students achieve such proficiency because study of a foreign language introduces students to non–English-speaking cultures, heightens awareness and comprehension of one's native tongue and serves the Nation's needs in commerce, diplomacy, defense, and education." To a great extent, *A Nation at Risk* established the rationale for foreign language study in the 1980s and beyond. It is important to note the priorities set in the ordering of the benefits of second-language learning.

While many of the assessments supported foreign language study, none, until December of 1983, made any effort to define the role of second languages in the curricula of the schools. In that month, the National Advisory Board on International Education Programs declared foreign language a "basic," a feat teachers had been unable to achieve during the "Back to Basics" movement. In a report commissioned by the U.S. Secretary of Education (16, p. 2) the Board took the position that

> An emerging consensus places the study of foreign languages and cultures alongside the five "basics" of English, mathematics, computer science, social studies, and the natural sciences as fundamental components of a sound education.

It therefore becomes clear that teachers, in their earlier endeavors, forgot that there were "new basics" and that these included "far greater understanding of the peoples on this planet" (Lafayette and Strasheim, 14, p. 30). "Foreign languages and cultures" will make the "impossible dream" come true. That is borne out in the phrase coined by the College Board, "proficiency in another language and culture" (1, p. 28).

"Proficiency": The Buzzword and the Reality

"Proficiency" is *the* buzzword of the 1980s. And, like many a buzzword before it, "proficiency" is the signal of an idea whose time has come, for the "movement" toward proficiency began mid-century during the "audiolingual revolution" when the profession began to focus on skills development and deep culture. The foreign language profession in the 1980s *is* committed to the development of "proficiency-oriented" curriculum and instruction and to the production of "proficient" students—that is, students who are able "to function effectively in the language in real-life contexts" (Liskin-Gasparro, 15, p. 12). If the curricula, instruction, and *students* do not materialize, the public support, which interprets "real-life contexts" to mean "cultural contexts" will disappear with the speed of light.

The challenge to classroom teachers is not as difficult as it may seem at first glance, for what is needed is much more a matter of realigning priorities than of acquiring new behaviors. The profession learned an enormous amount in the decade of "innovative overchoice" (Lafayette, 13) just past, and, as Liskin-Gasparro (15, p. 40) has pointed out, "Our understanding of how language is acquired has never been greater, and textbooks, for all we may complain about their imperfections, have never been better." What we need to do, as Krashen (12, p. 53) has contended, is "to allow . . . theory, applied research, and teachers' ideas to contribute to practice and to enrich each other." *All foreign language teachers in the "real world" of the classroom, as a matter of personal and professional policy, are going to have to strive for synthesis and integration—and to demand synthesis and integration of the leadership.* As Finocchiaro (6, p. 6) so wisely advised us, "There should never be an either/or decision about educational or linguistic theories or strategies."

Designing Proficiency-Oriented Curricula

Byrnes (4, p. 128) argues that as teachers become proficiency-oriented they will tend to see "language not only as form but also as function, not only as product but also as process, and as a creative, interactive task performance rather than as an uncontextualized set of linguistic behaviors." This is fine as far as it goes, but any curriculum designed for the real world of the classroom must be directed toward the concept of "proficiency in language and culture" (1, p. 28). *The ACTFL Guidelines* (2), as they emerged in 1986, do not serve the "real world." *"Proficiency in language and culture" is what the national assessments of schooling were really calling for, what humanities education demands, and the only concept that will, in all likelihood, motivate a significant number of students to remain in the sequence long enough to attain meaningful levels of proficiency.*[1] Although the words "motivation" and "retention" are rare in the emergent literature on proficiency, they represent critical issues in the "real world." Only about half of the foreign language teacher population teaches a single language or a single discipline full-time (Lafayette and Strasheim, 14). Half of the student population is in level one, and 8 percent or more in levels one and two.

An equally compelling reason for focusing on the concept of "proficiency in language and culture" has been advanced by Crawford-Lange and Lange (5, p. 172) who argue that

> the integration of language and culture is even a more powerful organizing principle for foreign-language education than is language proficiency, because that integration is prerequisite to true language competence.

Without the integration of language and culture, that "active, spontaneous *use* of language and productive cultural interaction" of which Higgs speaks will never come to pass (8, p. v).

Although past efforts at curriculum design "have been handicapped by having to make do with a fuzzy, if at times elegant, itinerary toward a vaguely specified destination," as Heilenman and Kaplan have charged (7, p. 59), the reason teachers have not defined "performances" stems from our failure in academe to determine the purposes for which we are training our students. Our Foreign Service Institute and Interagency Language Roundtable mentors have specific positions for which their students are being prepared. But what can academe offer the learner who invests several years in acquiring second-language skills beyond developing the capacity to discuss himself or herself ever more fully and in ever more complex terms? When the Indiana Task Force (28, p. ix) faced this issue, it was determined that we are training the young people in Hoosier schools:

- To become culturally sensitive and communicatively competent travelers, students, and/or workers in other societies and cultures in the world,
- To interact positively and more effectively with the native speakers they meet and work with in this country, and
- To evolve more of those capabilities needed for productive citizenship in Indiana, the United States, and the world.

"Performances" arise out of the situations, not the speech functions, a student the age we are teaching might encounter in the "real life" context of the culture or cultures that speak the language. This cultural "backdrop" gives students vicarious experiences rather than merely language exercises in which they "translate" themselves into another code. There is an enormous difference between "skits" and role-playing. Students really do believe that "language is the medium, culture is the message" (Strasheim, 27). If they did not, our promotional and recruitment strategies would not work at all.

Once the purposes for learning the language have been established, teachers can go on to define those "language proficiency achievement goals for the end of each year of study at all levels, with special attention to speaking proficiency" called for by the President's Commission (22, p. 42). They can define "performances" in terms of what student travelers can comprehend aurally, say, read, or write in a cultural context.[2] It matters not one whit whether these "language proficiency achievement goals" are called "learning outcomes," "performances," "functions," "communicative competencies," or "proficiencies"; what does matter is that the curriculum will be defined in terms of the "active, spontaneous use of language and productive cultural interaction" (Higgs, 8, p. v) of which the student is expected to be capable and the means of providing "global evaluation . . . in various skill areas" (Heilenman and Kaplan, 7, p. 59). In defining "language proficiency achievement goals" in this way, teachers will also be establishing what "proficiency" is to be attained at each successive level in the sequence. This kind of approach, due to the "cycling" or expansion of performances from level to level, will help students to mark their progress in ways unknown before. What is critical in this type of goal setting, however, is a point made by Schaefer (23, p. 13):

> However modest the goal, it must be clearly stated and must be met, without compromise and without exception: Above all, it must be meaningful, must ensure that the student can use the language to the extent that it provides some degree of self-satisfaction. That is not too much to ask, but in the final analysis, it is everything.

This approach to orienting the curriculum toward proficiency is very much in keeping with three of Omaggio's (20, p. 51) five hypotheses for the proficiency-oriented classroom:

- Opportunities must be provided for students to practice using the language in a range of contexts likely to be encountered in the target culture.
- Opportunities should be provided for students to carry out a range of functions (task universals) likely to be necessary for interacting in the target language and culture.
- Cultural understanding must be promoted in various ways so that students are prepared to understand, accept, and live harmoniously in the target language community.

The curriculum guide defined in terms of learning outcomes or "language proficiency achievement goals" will not merely be a document to be sent to the administration and then stashed in a desk drawer or a filing cabinet. *The student-performance-oriented curriculum guide will be a constantly used "map" toward the twenty or so goals students must achieve in moving toward that clearly specified "proficiency," which is the destination for that level of instruction.*

Realigning Our Instructional Priorities

Ironically, students *do* learn what they are taught, and what they have been taught, as Heilenman and Kaplan (7, p. 58) point out, has not led to proficiency:

> Learning a certain number of objectives along with their morphological changes does not translate directly into being able to describe, just as learning the various uses and forms of the subjunctive is not the same thing as being able to defend one's opinions and state one's feelings. . . . The stated goal of such programs, language use, has not been met because the real goal, in terms of what students were expected to do, pertained primarily to form rather than to function and was more concerned with complete sentences than with discourse-level competence.

The plain fact of the matter is that teachers have devoted 80 to 85 percent of their instructional time to structure-based activities. In addition to the time expended on grammar explanations, oral mechanical drills, and correcting written homework exercises, speaking activities and reading-comprehension questions have also focused on the structures employed. Even small groups or pairs, when they are used at all, have been utilized more often than not for drilling rather than for interactive language-use activities. As Jeffries (11, p. 1) makes clear, however, the proficiency-oriented or

> communicative classroom is *about communication*, not just language. It is as much about giving orders as it is about the imperative form. It is as much about gesture, intonation, and context as it is about sentence structure or vocabulary. It is not only *how* to say it, but also when and why and what to expect in reply.

One of the real reasons error correction has become such a problem is that it pervades almost every moment of every class meeting because almost every minute is spent attending to form. As Stevick (25, p. 28) has indicated, "The question about maintaining accuracy is not 'whether'; it is 'when' and 'how'." Although guides like *Error Correction Techniques for the Foreign Language Classroom* (Walz, 30) are extremely useful, the real issues are the need to develop greater equity in the amount of class time spent on mechanical practices and that spent on language-use activities and that corrections should occur in "skill-getting" but not in "skill-using."[4] There is probably no other discipline in the curricula of the schools where error correction is so intensive and so extensive. While parents praise and foster language use in children acquiring their native language, foreign language teachers tend to "pick" and "nag." Our focus on error correction and form may well be a contributing factor in the fact that the real "terminal 2" is level two in the sequence.

One way to assure that language-use activities get "equal time" is to follow up on one of the practices of Suggestopedia: schedule the communicative activities early in the period. But while this type of scheduling is helpful, we also have to redefine our concepts of what language-use activities are. Every student ought to be spending a significant amount of his or her "time on task"

- listening for information and for internalizing the holistic patterns of the language;

- speaking in meaningful, interactive contexts;
- reading to acquire knowledge; and
- writing to express personal information and ideas.

In other words, when there is equity in the amount of instructional time spent on mechanical drills and language-use activities, there must also be equity in the time focused on message with that focused on form. When we discuss what students did on the weekend, it cannot simply be to review the past tense. If a student says that she or he studied, we are going to have to learn to "piggyback" questions to get to a discourse level: what, how long, where, with whom, why. As Snyder and DeSelms (24, p. 4) have said, "Most real communication does not take place between two people with 25 or more others listening, not to what is being said, but rather to how it is being said."

But while these are "band aid" solutions we are going to have to deal in some substantive way with Krashen's "learning/acquisition" hypothesis (12). As Stevick (25, p. 23) says:

> Over the centuries teachers have used countless methods and techniques. Most of the time, by whatever method, we have concentrated on trying to teach so that our students would learn. Acquisition has come—when it has come at all—as a desirable but incidental by-product of good teaching and good learning. Its recent identification as a separate process casts light on what we have been doing all along. This knowledge also opens up exciting new prospects for what we may do in the future. Now that we see the difference between learning and acquisition, we can balance them against each other and combine them so that each will promote the other.

While Krashen defines learning as formal classroom study and acquisition as the subconscious "picking up" of a language in the environment, Terrell (29, p. 225) helps teachers enormously in their efforts to "combine them so that each will promote the other" by taking the position that

> acquisition as a process is seen as a mixture of conscious and subconscious attempts at binding form and meaning and then accessing these forms for a communicative purpose. Learning exercises may in some cases aid the acquisition process for many students.

In early stages, students need natural communicative experiences in order to bind meaning to structural and lexical form in their efforts to internalize the holistic patterns of the language as they progress. Through vicarious cultural experiences presented in the second-language classroom, students can "acquire" the language as if they were abroad.

Implicit in the "balancing" or combining of acquisition and learning in the classroom, however, is Krashen's "input" hypothesis (12), which holds that learners acquire language by listening to or reading materials slightly beyond their level of competence. As Terrell, (29, p. 223) says, "Learning is not acquisition, and it does not *become* acquisition without the necessary comprehensible input." Oller (19, p. 5) considers how "input" becomes "intake," evolving three hypotheses—a textuality, an expectancy, and an episode hypothesis—to lead to "pragmatic mapping," which he defines as "the systematic linking of discourse structures to the events of ordinary experience (and vice versa)." Deploring what he calls "unmotivated" texts, solely designed for the manipulation of structure with no regard for meaning, Oller calls for "motivated" texts, which are built around meaningful conflict, have a story line carried by stageable actions, and which respect the logic of experience. He argues (p. 12) that "foreign language teaching would be more successful if it incorporated principles of good story writing along with the benefits of sound linguistic analysis." But while Oller provides us with the kind of wherewithal that is needed for "comprehensible input," Terrell (29, p. 216) warns us that "comprehensible input" is only one of the necessary conditions for acquisition to take place; the other is "opportunities to access those bound forms to express ideas in meaningful contexts." *"Balancing" or "combining" learning and acquisition with skill-using and skill-getting should become an instructional goal.*

An increased emphasis on skill-using will have to bring with it a greater emphasis on grouping and student interaction. Nerenz and Knop (18, p. 52) found paired learning especially effective:

> Perhaps the best balance between the speech and engagement variables . . . is found during pair activities. While only a small number of formal or informal pair activities were observed, the ratio of student-to-teacher speech was the highest (8.44), more than double that observed for small groups. Moreover, high percentages of communicative and target language interactions were observed (88%, 82%), while engagement averaged 78 percent.

By contrast, when testing large groups, there was very high engagement (87%) and a large percentage of the target language was spoken (95%). However, those factors were offset by a high amount of teacher-talk (85%), a low amount of student-to-teacher talk (46%), and a large amount of repetitive speech (37%) (Nerenz and Knop, 18).

Realigning our instructional priorities to "balance" learning and acquisition, that is, skill-using, should ultimately have salutary effects on both motivation and retention. We may even find that the kind of error correction we do is dramatically changed because students will have an opportunity to "bind" and "access" forms in less inhibiting and frustrating ways.

Eclectic Methodologies for the Future

Grammar-translation was the dominant philosophy for more than the first half of this century and several decades before that. It was "the one true way" despite the fact that it neither garnered public support nor motivated student interest. When the "audiolingual revolution" swept the country, it was the new "one true way," but the pace of change had so escalated that, despite the early public support and student interest, the new "one true way" lasted only a little more than a decade. The demise of audiolingualism taught the profession that if there was any absolute at all it was that one true ways would no longer serve. By the 1970s, the decade of "innovative overchoice" (Lafayette, 13), we were adjusting to methodological "working hypotheses" (Strasheim, 26) and by the 1980s Higgs declared "methodological eclecticism" a "logical imperative" (8, p. 8).

While "methodological eclecticism" may well be a "logical imperative" for the immediate future, we must never forget Finocchiaro's warning (6, p. 7) that while "our methods should be eclectic," they should *not* be "haphazard or random." What we have to adopt is what Patterson, Purkey, and Parker (21, p. 115) call "strategic planning": "A strategic plan is dynamic, and is constantly being monitored, interpreted, altered, improved, and, above all, implemented." Classroom teachers are going to have to experiment in an ongoing effort to find those methods in "consonance with the teacher's personality, the students' learning styles and rhythms, and board of education or community demands" (Finocchiaro, 6, p. 8).

What we will, in all likelihood, find out is that, given different emphases and levels of competence at the various stages of the sequence, "different approaches may be appropriate" (Higgs, 8, p. 8). Certainly strategies like Total Physical Response[5] and the Natural Approach[6] are far more appropriate in the beginning level of instruction while other kinds of strategies for the "balancing" of learning and acquisition must be found for the other levels. In the process, clear focuses will be established at each level, although every facet will be handled. The end product will be a diversification of the levels at long last, with students assuming more and more responsibility for their learning and using the language as a vehicle for the expansion of knowledge and their personal horizons as they advance. In many ways, the manner in which we handle the "balancing" of learning and acquisition in the early levels is critical, for motivation and retention hinge upon our success at showing real student progress toward the attainment of proficiency in these stages.

Conclusion

James (10, p. 3) has said, "Proficiency represents the basic principle upon which our profession has operated for centuries." In the 1980s the call is for the profession to bring its classroom practices into harmony with its goals and principles. We have most of the knowledge and resources needed. What remains to be seen is if we have the will to do what has to be done.

Notes

1. See Pamela J. Myers, "Motivational Factors and Student Retention in School Foreign Language Programs," pp. 21–30 in David P. Benseler, ed., *Teaching the Basics in the Foreign Language Classroom: Options and Strategies*, Report of the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, 1979).
2. For a fuller treatment of this approach to curriculum design, see Walter H. Bartz and Lorraine A. Strasheim, "Achieving Proficiency Goals through Competency Guidelines," pp. 55–67 in Barbara Snyder, ed., *Second-Language Acquisition: Preparing for Tomorrow*, Report of the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, 1986).
3. There are two fine studies of teacher priorities and the utilization of class time: Peter A. Eddy,

"Present Status of Foreign Language Teaching: A Northeast Conference Survey," pp. 13–59 in Thomas H. Geno, ed., *Our Profession: Present Status and Future Directions* (Middlebury, VT: Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1980); and Anne Nerenz, "Utilizing Class Time in Foreign Language Instruction," pp. 78–89 in David P. Benseler, ed., *Teaching the Basics in the Foreign Language Classroom: Options and Strategies*, Report of the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, 1979).

4. Wilga Rivers coined the terms "skill-getting" and "skill-using" in *A Practical Guide to the Teaching of French* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975). They appear in her *Guides* to German and Spanish as well.
5. In James J. Asher's *Learning Another Language through Actions: The Complete Teacher's Guidebook* (Los Gatos, CA: Sky Oaks Productions, Inc., 1982), there are 75 pages of classroom lessons, including discussions of how to expand basic structures, introduction of the future tense, and so on, all with a focus on developing listening comprehension.
6. The sections on oral communication development through acquisition activities and additional sources of input for acquisition and learning in Stephen D. Krashen's and Tracy D. Terrell's *The Natural Approach* (Hayward, CA: The Alemany Press, 1983), make the book an invaluable resource.

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3. "ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines 1982," pp. 219–26 in Theodore V. Higgs, ed., *Teaching for Proficiency, the Organizing Principle.* The ACTFL Foreign Language Education Series, Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, 1984.
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5. Crawford-Lange, Linda M., and Dale L. Lange. "Doing the Unthinkable in the Second-Language Classroom: A Process for the Integration of Language and Culture," pp. 139–78 in Theodore V. Higgs, ed., *Teaching for Proficiency, the Organizing Principle.* ACTFL Foreign Language Education Series. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, 1984.
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4

Building Proficiency: Activities for the Four Skills

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What Is Proficiency?

Proficiency appears to be the bandwagon of the 1980s, but it is and should be much more than that. Since the publication of the *ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines* in 1982 (2) and the 1986 revised *Guidelines* (1), the focus of second-language teaching has been shifting toward the concept of language as a functional skill. Although the *Guidelines* provide us with descriptions of learner behaviors at various stages of proficiency in each of the four skills, they do not tell us how to achieve our proficiency goals. In order to translate the proficiency guidelines into classroom practice, it is first necessary to understand what the idea of proficiency implies.

The general dictionary definition of proficiency is "performing . . . with expert correctness and facility" (4). To have proficiency implies, therefore, that considerable skills in a given field have been developed. Within the foreign language field, however, the concept of proficiency stresses the developing stages of proficiency rather than the expert final product. To gain a perspective, one can consider the probability that a Concorde pilot first became proficient in flying a Piper Cub, and a

Meryl Streep probably performed proficiently in a grade-school play. Nevertheless, the language teaching profession must remember to use the term *proficiency* with care and with adequate definitions, keeping the more generic definition in mind. With this caveat noted, then, language proficiency can be defined as the student's language performance. More specifically, proficiency refers to an individual's relative ability to function appropriately in the target language in specific communicative circumstances (e.g., language for travel, career goals, personal contacts with native speakers).

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* describe typical performance characteristics in each of the four skills using a scale that ranges from no language ability to the language ability of an educated native speaker. Between these extremes, there are ten levels and subdivisions: Novice-Low, Novice-Mid, Novice-High, Intermediate-Low, Intermediate-Mid, Intermediate-High, Advanced, Advanced-Plus, Superior, and Distinguished (1). Also implied in the *Guidelines* is that a learner's performance may vary at different points in time and may depend upon such factors as the situation, the skill used, or the specific function(s) in question. A learner may, for example, function at the Novice-Mid level in speaking and writing, at the Novice-High level in listening, and at the Intermediate-Low level in reading.

It is important that educators remember that the levels of the ACTFL Proficiency scale are meant for assessment and that they are neither static (such as I.Q. measures) nor predictive (such as aptitude). Even the very best beginning high school students will probably not finish the year at the Novice level, and almost all of the advanced students in the fourth or fifth year class, even those with excellent averages, will probably remain at the Novice or Intermediate level (Omaggio, 19, p. 19). Reaching another level (from Intermediate-Low to Intermediate-Mid, for example) should be used positively to denote a student's progress rather than compare the student's limited language to that of the educated native speaker. Unrealistic expectations of the degree of proficiency possible at any level are a major factor in the foreign language dropout rate. Students (and some of their teachers) might believe, for example, that they are failures because they are still Novices after two years of study, even though becoming a Novice-High may be an outstanding achievement. Foreign language teachers, especially at the secondary level, must be sure that administrators and the community understand what levels of proficiency can be attained realistically, and they must also understand that proficiency refers to a multilevel range of expertise. An accurate and complete picture of the concept of proficiency will, therefore, allow teachers, administrators, and parents to have realistic expectations about sequences of language study.

It is also important to note that the scale is skill-based rather than knowledge-based, whereas achievement testing in the foreign language typically requires students to demonstrate knowledge of material covered in a given chapter or course. A student's class performance may reveal, for example, a substantial understanding of the language and the culture, yet the student's overall language proficiency in an authentic communicative exchange may be substantially different.

How Do Students Develop Language Skills?

In order to understand foreign language skill development some assumptions about the context within which these processes occur need to be examined. Heilenman and Kaplan (10) formulated nine premises upon which a proficiency-based curriculum is based, three of which are important in developing proficiency-oriented activities. One of these premises states (p. 58) that "proficiency in a foreign language is attained through a proficiency-based curriculum." Heilenman and Kaplan go on to explain that

> learning a certain number of adjectives along with their morphological changes does not translate directly into being able to describe, just as learning the various uses and forms of the subjunctive is not the same thing as being able to defend one's opinions and state one's feelings.

Another premise states (p. 59) that "the demonstration of proficiency in a foreign language requires the use of the language," and the authors also believe that

> it cannot be said too often that the difference between levels of proficiency as defined by the proficiency guidelines is not one of knowledge in terms of

> achievement tests, but one of ability to use the language in less structured and more global settings.

Therefore, classroom processes and activities used to develop language proficiency are not simply reorganized grammar-based activities, but rather activities meant to develop a functional skill or to function within a realistic context.

Another premise states (p. 62) that "a proficiency-based curriculum is eclectic. It starts with outcomes; it does not prescribe practices," which, according to Heilenman and Kaplan, suggests

> a rationally-based curriculum in which instructors pick and choose among the available methods, approaches, and techniques on the basis of their effectiveness at each given level.

Evidence is beginning to emerge that there may be substantial differences in the approaches and techniques that are effective at the various levels. Higgs and Clifford (11, p. 69), for example, cite data from the Interagency Language Roundtable showing the relative contributions to proficiency at various levels of the different subskills: vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and sociolinguistic factors. Vocabulary, for example, a heavily content-oriented subskill, plays a relatively more substantial role at the Novice Level than at the Advanced Level. Grammar skill, on the other hand, becomes increasingly important as the student progresses toward more advanced levels. Another difference results from the short attention span of today's adolescents, which suggests limited use of sustained activities with younger language learners.

In order for language learners to improve their proficiency in a classroom setting, the class must be based on the assumptions of a proficiency-based curriculum, realistic opportunities to use the skill, and carefully chosen eclectic approaches and techniques. Within this context, the processes or learning stages through which learners improve their proficiency levels can be discussed.

How Do Learners Become Proficient?

Psychologists Dreyfus and Dreyfus (Trotter, 31) studied expertise in airline pilots, chess players, automobile drivers, and second-language masters and isolated five stages of skill development common to all learners and the types of thinking involved at each stage. These learning stages are Novice, Advanced Beginner, Competent Learner, Proficient Learner, and Expert.

Novices learn to recognize objective facts and figures relevant to the skill and rules for deciding how to act on the facts and figures. The basic rules ignore context, and novices have very little global understanding of tasks.

Advanced beginners usually gain experience in real situations and their skills have improved to a marginally acceptable level. Advanced beginners are learning to recognize and operate on previously defined facts and apply more sophisticated rules to context-free and situational instances.

Competent learners use planning in simplifying and organizing situations. They may or may not choose to follow rules and procedures, and the outcome (success or failure) of a plan is often clearly remembered—an important aspect of future expertise.

Proficient learners follow a rapid, fluent style made possible by the ability to recognize important task elements and ignore irrelevant aspects. This "holistic similarity recognition" is triggered by memories of similar past experiences. Although they can think analytically, proficient learners are more intuitive.

Experts do not need to make decisions or apply rules. Skill has become ingrained to the point that the expert is unaware of it. Again, holistic similarity recognition results in expert performance.

It is interesting to note the similarities of these learning stages to the levels of the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*, although it is important to note that the guidelines define a *product* and the learning stages of Dreyfus and Dreyfus define *process*. They are, therefore, not necessarily concurrent steps. A few students, for example, may reach the Expert stage of learning the skills within the Novice range of the ACTFL scale. These are students who frequently and meaningfully use (without making decisions or applying rules) many of the memorized formulas and the common rejoinders of the language.

Proficiency-Oriented Activities: General Considerations

The next sections of this article will present activities that help develop the proficiency of students in the four skill areas: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Although guidelines and suggestions are provided, it is still the teacher who knows best his or her capabilities, the abilities of students, and any factors in a class, school, and community that influence educational practice. Decisions about how and when to use these and similar activities is the teacher's choice; what does not seem debatable is that these activities do indeed promote the development of the student's language proficiency.

In addition, the activities focus generally on communicative activities. Paulston and Selekman (20) identified four types of language activities: mechanical, meaningful, communicative, and interactive. To help students develop language proficiency, classroom activities should generally be of the meaningful type. Activities of the communicative type are more advantageous, especially because of the student's personal involvement; interactive activities have the benefit of giving students more realistic experiences in using the language.

The question of realism in the language classroom has become an increasingly important consideration in recent years. Galloway suggests (8, p. 50) that "authentic tasks are those which invite the learner to do what would be done, in much the way it would be done, by native users of the language." Swaffar (29) suggests that in the foreign language classroom authenticity can be defined as a task whose objective is the transmission of meaning and one that has an authentic communicative goal. Thus, the term "real" (Wattenmaker and Wilson, 32) communication again becomes important and is defined in terms of the transmission of messages—usually, but not always or necessarily, with authentic materials, in authentic situations, or with authentic tasks. It is therefore the communicative task that determines whether or not authentic materials and tasks are used. In fact, such materials should be used whenever and wherever possible to do so without causing undue frustration to the teacher or the student. For example, because of the lack of available authentic materials, teachers who have limited time available cannot easily find such materials or prepare the necessary activities that accompany them. Students, especially at the beginning levels in high school, are often intimidated by authentic texts, even if they can complete the tasks that are based on them.

Listening Proficiency

Belasco (6) maintains that in order to become proficient listeners, learners must spend time listening to the types of materials that native speakers listen to, i.e., practical or functional listening. Many teachers feel that students will "pick up" listening comprehension on their own, but decades of producing nonproficient listeners in the classroom have shown that casual approaches to listening do not necessarily develop that skill. The audiotapes of the past have rarely included the types of exercises relevant to developing listening proficiency, and commercially prepared videotapes are just beginning to reach the market. Teachers, therefore, usually have to find, edit, or create their own materials in order to teach listening skills in the classroom. Realistic materials that are based on familiar topics are best for beginners, who often become frustrated and lose the message when listening to unedited authentic materials. Thus, contrived materials can be supplemented with carefully chosen or edited authentic materials. Relevant listening experience might include, for example, radio and television broadcasts, conversations, instructions, music, or speeches.

Long (16) lists characteristics that enable teachers to select appropriate listening materials for beginning language learners:

1. They should include both live and recorded materials. Video, because of its additional visual cues, is an excellent medium for teaching listening skills.
2. The listening passages should have a varied format and length and should feature both dialogue and connected discourse.
3. Topics should be familiar ones.
4. Vocabulary should be mostly familiar, but unknown words and phrases may be included to make activities more realistic. Students should be able to hypothesize the meanings of unknown words and phrases from context. Obviously, comprehension of a passage should not rest on unfamiliar vocabulary that cannot be hypothesized from context.

5. Rate of speech should be nearly normal.
6. Advance organizers (prelistening exercises) should be provided so that students understand what they are to do. In many cases, providing questions in advance is sufficient.
7. Follow-up exercises should test listening comprehension—not speaking, reading, or grammar. Thus, students should be allowed to answer in the native language (12) or with simple one-word answers or short phrases in the target language.

The listening activities described below conform to the guidelines suggested by Long (16); further they develop useful skills necessary for effective listening (e.g., the ability to predict content, to guess from context, to identify key ideas or topics, to understand the gist of a message).

1. **Advertisements.** Advertisements for items, especially those of interest to the student, can provide interesting listening practice. As a prelistening exercise for a sale ad, students can be asked to discuss what information is usually conveyed (dates, location of the store, items that are on sale, price reductions, etc.) They can also generate a list of vocabulary words usually contained in such ads (hurry, sale, bargain, savings, etc.). After having students recall pertinent target language vocabulary that they already know, the teacher can provide additional words that are needed. In order to help guide student listening, general questions can be given in advance (e.g., What is the product? Where is it sold? Why is it a bargain? When is the sale?) to answer as they listen the first time to the ad. More detailed questions can then be asked using formats such as true–false, completion, logical–absurd.

2. **Weather Reports.** As a prelistening activity, ask who listened to the weather report recently and how that report differs from televised weather reports (shorter, usually just the temperature and chance of rain are given). Then give students any information that might help them better understand the weather report. If, for example, weather reports are given for the Southwest states in Spanish, temperatures are given in Fahrenheit; elsewhere Celsius would be used. Students can then provide a summary in English of the weather report or could be asked to correct a script of the weather report that contains misinformation.

3. Conversations. Listening to authentic conversations is an activity that both challenges and motivates students. It challenges them to use the vocabulary and grammar they know to understand what is being said, and it motivates them because these conversations represent realistic encounters in the target culture. If students listen, for example, to a conversation in a beauty salon, they could be asked to identify the speakers and how they know each other. After a preliminary activity such as this that requires students to listen for the gist, more detailed information can be solicited. For example, a skeletal outline of the conversation could be given to the students, who fill out the missing information as they listen to the conversation.

Reading Proficiency

Because of its solitary nature, reading is considered by some learners to be the most pleasurable and least threatening of the basic language skills. In addition, experts (3, 7, 17) tell us that it is the skill that is maintained the longest after second language instruction is discontinued. As Larson and Jones (14) maintain, however, second language reading is a very complex process and bringing learners to desirable levels of proficiency is not an easy task. Many learners begin their study of a second language with very proficient reading skills in their native language, but others may have only minimal abilities. Even learners who are fluent readers in the native language are not always able to transfer those skills readily. Yorio's (33) research points out important differences between reading in the native language and reading in a second language:

1. Nonnative readers' knowledge of the target language is different from native speakers' knowledge.
2. Nonnatives' knowledge of the target language is imperfect, making it difficult for them to recognize comprehension cues.
3. It is difficult for nonnative readers to make associations because they mistake or completely miss pertinent cues.
4. Beginning nonnative readers have short memory spans; they often forget what they have just decoded.
5. Interference from the native language is constant.

In addition to these inherent problems, we must also take note of the cognitive psychologists' emphasis on the importance of meaningfulness and what students already know (Ausubel, 5) in the learning process. In order for learning to take place, the task must be meaningful, that is, students must be able to relate the material to what is already known.

Careful planning is needed to help learners approach reading tasks. Phillips (21) suggests a useful five-stage approach: preteaching/preparation, skimming and scanning, decoding/intensive reading, comprehension check, and transferable/integrating skills. Omaggio (19), following Phillips's approach, offers a selection of instructional techniques to be used at each of the five stages and at various levels of proficiency. Basically, these techniques tap knowledge the learners already possess, help them recognize pertinent cues, understand the gist, test comprehension, and enhance reading skills.

The reading activities in the following section are based on a reading taken from a first-year high school French text (13, p. 240). The selection describes the adventures of Alain Bombard, a young French doctor who believed that hunger and thirst do not always cause the death of shipwreck victims; he felt instead that fear and panic are often responsible. To test his ideas, he spent three months in the Atlantic Ocean on a life raft. Ultimately, his survival justified his ideas.

Prereading Strategies

The purpose of prereading activities is to build and activate students' background knowledge and to motivate students to read. It is important to use a variety of techniques not only to maintain student interest but also to have them approach the reading in a variety of ways.

Illustrations. Prior to reading the text, show illustrations or photos that accompany the reading on the screen. Ask questions about the illustration in the target language: Where is the man? Is he alone or with friends? What's he wearing? What is the weather like? Why do you think he is there?

Titles. Write the title on the board and discuss its meaning. Ask students to predict what the passage might be about.

Key Words. Choose several key words from the text and write them on the board. Ask students to predict what the story might be about. Another option is to have students write an original composition using those key words. Then, ask them to compare their compositions with the reading passage.

Theme. Choose one or two key words that describe the theme of the passage and ask students to brainstorm ideas related to the theme. A student-generated list about fear might include, for example, night, snakes, spiders, crime, etc. Use the student-generated list as an introduction to this passage about fear and courage.

Vocabulary in Context. Choose several vocabulary words that are essential to the comprehension of the passage. Write the words in isolation on the board, ask students to give a definition for each, and then show students the same words used in sentences that make the meaning clear from the context. Ask students to revise their definitions, and finally, ask them to verify their definitions with a dictionary. The technique of contextual redefinition (Tierney, et al., 30) will not only help build vocabulary and remind students to look at the context for clues, but it will also help activate background knowledge.

Specific Purposes. Before asking students to read the passage, give them one or two specific purposes for reading. Tell them, for example, that the story is about a man who was alone in the Atlantic for three months, and that after reading the passage, they should be able to tell why he set out on his trip.

Different Points of View. Ask the students to read the passage from a particular point of view. They might read the story, for example, from the perspective of an inexperienced (or experienced) sailor or from the point of view of Alain's family. Different students might be asked to read the passage from different points of view. Students remember passages differently, depending upon the task set prior to reading.

The Reading Process

At the beginning and intermediate levels most reading passages are short enough to be read in class. After one or two prereading activities, introduce the passage and ask students to read it silently. If students were asked to make predictions about the text, the teacher may want to let them read one or two paragraphs and then ask if their predictions are accurate or if they need to be revised. In some stories, this process may have to be repeated as the reading progresses because students need to make sure that their predictions are correct before they continue. Students may need to read a passage several times in order to comprehend it fully: first, skimming or scanning, for example; next, decoding or intensive reading; and finally, global comprehension. In order to ensure that students are reading for meaning, give them a different task for each reading.

Postreading Activities

The purpose of postreading activities is to check comprehension and to extend the reading to other language skills. Like the prereading activities, these activities must be varied and interesting. The following are suggestions for follow-up activities.

Main Idea. State the main idea. Ask students to find one or two sentences from the passage that tell the main idea.

New Title. Ask students to generate possible titles for the passage and then vote on the best one.

New Perspectives. Retell the story from another perspective. How might Alain, Jack, Alain's mother, or Alain's wife or girlfriend tell the story?

Take the Author's Chair. Ask one student to play the part of Alain, and other students to interview him, asking questions about the trip. Students may elaborate on the story.

Personalize. Ask personalized questions. Extend the reading by asking students to relate it to their own lives. Would they want to take such a trip? Why or why not? Do you think Alain was foolish? brave? What kind of adventure would they like to have?

Oral Proficiency

Proficiency in a foreign language has long been associated with oral skill and this association has grown stronger with the advent of the concept of proficiency as defined by the *Guidelines* and the accompanying idea of a common yardstick or unifying principle. Only recently has the profession begun to deal with proficiency in other skill areas, perhaps because speaking has long been the greatest concern of teachers and students who often cite it as a primary reason for language study or because the Oral Proficiency Interview was the first measure developed to accompany the *Guidelines*. In addition, this emphasis is a logical extension of communicative competence (Savignon, 24), which also focused largely on oral language use.

Because speaking means different things for different people, it is important to examine what conditions are necessary for communication to take place. Schulz and Bartz mention several factors (25, p. 89): (1) authentic, meaningful life situations, (2) motivation, (3) freedom to use the language and to create and experiment linguistically, (4) a supportive classroom environment where students can speak without fear of ridicule, and (5) rewards for content rather than criticism of errors. In light of these considerations, communicative interaction is difficult to achieve in a conversational group of thirty. Students need to talk in groups of the size that they will most often encounter in real life, and they need to practice talking to the people that they will most often talk to, their peers. Small-group and paired student-centered activities are essential for meeting the conditions necessary for real oral practice to occur. Additionally, interacting in small groups gives students substantially more time for practice since all students practice at once. Finally, small-group interaction provides students with a chance for inherent meaningfulness in communication that may be inhibited in a large-group situation (Snyder and DeSelms, 26).

Based on the aforementioned considerations, the following suggestions are offered for implementing oral proficiency activities in the classroom:

1. If a student has to concentrate on grammar to complete the exercise, it is a grammar exercise, not a communicative exercise.
2. Spoken language differs from written language (Rings, 22). It is not necessary to insist on complete sentences when speaking. Hesitation when speaking is normal.
3. As English teachers will attest, errors occur in one's native language. The focus in speaking activities should be on communication of a message, not correctness. A communicative exercise is not an appropriate format for correcting errors.

4. Students who exchange real information often want to comment on it, but doing so in the target language is beyond their ability. Nevertheless, time on task for students (individual opportunity to practice) is far greater in small groups even though up to one third of the time may be off task (Nerenz and Knop, 18). If this off-task time is limited, consider it a positive rather than negative sign because it means generally that students have reacted to content, not grammar.

Examples of activities to help students develop proficiency in speaking are given below.

1. Rejoinders, Responses, Replies, and Retorts

The purpose of this activity is to help eliminate inhibitions about speaking by giving the student practice in using easy, familiar, and meaningful responses. The activity is especially suitable for beginning levels, but it can also be used at intermediate and advanced levels. Students work in pairs for this activity.

Students take turns making statements (based on prepared list of statements, on pictures, on a reading selection, or on another exercise such as a sentence builder). Partners must reply, at first using an expression from a prepared list, and later, after several experiences with the listed expressions, from memory.

Examples:

Student A gives a *statement* (such as these based on a homework assignment).	Student B selects an appropriate *rejoinder* (from a list on the board or from memory).
I have a black dog.	Me too.
We live in a yellow house.	Who cares?
I like blue cars.	Fantastic!

2. Bad Mood

This activity provides practice in arguing, giving excuses, denying, etc. It is useful at all levels, but it works especially well when students are already in a bad mood. Students work in pairs. Partners take turns making statements (based on prepared list of statements, on pictures, on a reading selection, or on another exercise such as a sentence builder).

Partners must reply by supplying a sentence in which an antonym is used or in which a comparative or superlative is used.

Examples:

I like ice cream.	I dislike ice cream.
Math is easy.	Math is difficult.
Science is difficult.	Math is more difficult.
I hate Mondays.	I hate Mondays more than you do.

3. Affirmative!

This brief interview activity allows students to practice asking questions. It is useful at any level and students work in pairs. One student interviews another, asking yes-no questions on a specific topic or topics. The student must continue to ask questions until a predetermined number of "yes" answers has been given by the other student. The students then exchange roles and the other student conducts the interview. The questions may be spontaneous (especially at upper levels) or may be prepared in advance.

4. Unidentified Foreign Objects

This activity, which gives students practice in paraphrasing and circumlocution skills, is for intermediate and advanced students. Students work in pairs and one student is given a picture of an object for which they do *not* know the vocabulary word (e.g., mittens, encyclopedia, can opener, ivy, magnets, lawnmower). The partner does not see the picture. The student must describe the object in the target language or explain how it can be used until the partner guesses what it is. The partner may ask yes-no questions and may make one guess per turn in English. Gestures are not permitted.

5. What Happened First?

Advanced students work in small groups of approximately four students per group and practice hypothesizing skills during this activity. The activity is for advanced levels. Each student in a group of four receives one picture from a set of four sequential pictures. Students do not show the picture to others in the group. Each student describes his or her picture to the others and then the group must decide which picture is probably first in the sequence, which is second, which third, and which last.

6. Old Standbys

Other activities to build speaking proficiency are such old favorites as the following:

Show and Tell. Students describe an object, a snapshot, a drawing they have done, a fashion show, etc.

Repeat, Recall, Retell. Students recall a book, article, play, TV show, or newspaper article that they have seen or read and retell it to the class.

Guessing Games. Students try to guess another student's secret, an object that another student is thinking of (and has written down), another student's birthday, favorite color, favorite food, etc.

Mini-Interviews. Students question another student on a limited topic, such as his or her family, car, house, school schedule, future plans, and so on.

Brainstorming. Students produce as long a list as possible of, for example, excuses, beautiful sights, summer activities, characteristics of a friend, or well-known world events.

Role Playing. Students role-play situations or scenarios such as a parent and child deciding on use of the family car; a teacher and student talking about late homework; a brother and sister talking about doing household chores; or an employer and student applicant discussing a job opening and necessary qualifications.

Writing Proficiency

Two problems arise when foreign language teachers attempt to develop the writing proficiency of their students. First, if *native* language writing proficiency were measured using the ACTFL *Guidelines,* many students would show a rather low proficiency level. Transfer of skills, therefore, may be negligible or nonexistent. In fact, many foreign language teachers feel that, like grammar, writing in the native language may be improved by foreign language study.

Second, knowledge of form (grammar) is most often measured through writing, and, consequently, writing is usually judged by the quality of the language used rather than the message conveyed. Although teachers spend a great deal of time responding to the mechanics of student writing, research results suggest that "time might be more profitably spent in responding to more important aspects of student writing" (Robb, et al., 23, p. 91), that is, the message.

Larson and Jones (14, pp. 133–34) list five areas in which nonnative writers may need to be proficient: correspondence, providing essential information, completing forms, taking notes, and formal papers. They also believe that writing "deserves to be in fourth place, at least at the Novice and Intermediate levels of instruction" (p. 133). Yet because both grammar and content areas (culture, literature, history, and current events, for example) are commonly tested through writing, developing writing skill takes on added importance in the classroom.

Characteristics of good writing, according to Larson and Jones (14), include the following: (1) a clearly formulated message; (2) sensitivity to style and register; and (3) precise use of the language. These considerations correspond to the ACTFL proficiency components of function, content/context, and accuracy. Classroom teachers also add characteristics such as spelling, neatness, and legibility.

At the novice and intermediate level, student writing assignments tend to be more informal, i.e., reflections of oral communication. As students move toward higher levels of proficiency, they need to complete more formal writing assignments. It is at these higher levels that the differences between writing and speaking become important considerations.[1] For example, in writing, the basic unit of written communication is the sentence and grammatical conventions are more carefully observed. In addition, logical sequence and organization of ideas are more important because verbal and nonverbal feedback is not readily available. More complete information must also be provided because the specific characteristics and limitations of the reader may not be known.

Proficiency-oriented activities used to develop writing skill should go beyond dictation, beyond mechanics, and indeed beyond formal composition simply for the sake of formal composition. The following activities are examples of writing practice that meet these criteria.[2]

1. What's in a Face?

Each student is given a sheet of paper on which there are several faces expressing different emotions. For each face the student describes an incident that might have caused that expression. The student should not mention the emotion specifically. When students have completed their writing, they exchange their descriptions with partners and try to match the partners' descriptions with the correct faces. Follow-up activities such as this emphasize that writing should be done with a reader in mind.

This activity gives students practice in narrative writing and also control of the content and language level. A beginning student, for example, might describe a cause for an emotion that is less elaborate but just as correct as the description of a more advanced student.

2. Sound Effects Composition

The teacher records a series of sound effects that students use to create a story. (Sound-effects recordings can be obtained from many public or college libraries.) Although the teacher should take care to choose sounds that the students will be able to describe, most sound effects are ambiguous enough to allow students many interpretations.

The teacher plays the recording twice, allowing students to take notes. Each sound in the series should either last at least five seconds or be separated from the next sound by a five-second period of silence so that students have time to interpret the sound as well as take notes. If a sound is ambiguous, the teacher should allow students to interpret it rather than tell them what the sound is. An example of a sequence of sounds that has been used with third-year language students is the following: cocktail party, barroom brawl, car driving off, car driving through a rainy city, car door closing, walking on gravel, squeaky door opening and closing, dog barking, shotgun blasts, body falling downstairs, victim groaning, laughter, clock striking twelve, police whistles.

3. Focus on Faults

The teacher gives students a picture presenting a situation in which there are several flaws, problems, or faults. The teacher sets up a premise that requires students to write a critique of the place, situation, or incident. Using the picture in Figure 1, for example, the teacher asks each student to imagine that it is a photo of him or her with a friend at a restaurant that they visited last night. Their task is to write a letter to the manager of the restaurant complaining about their dining experience.

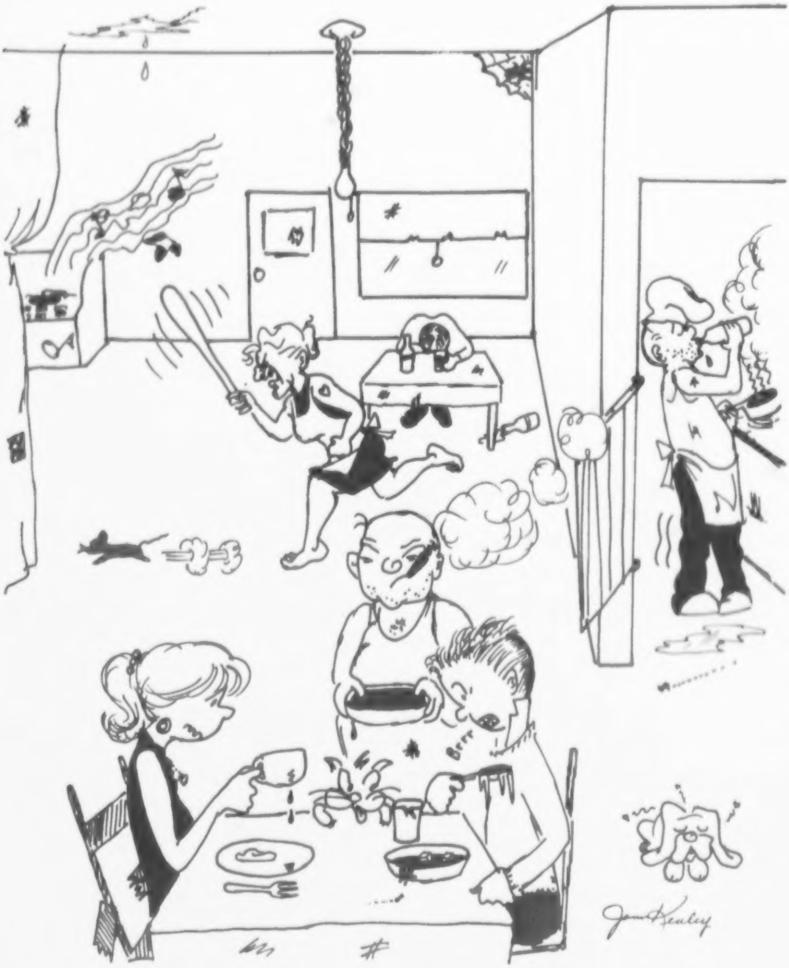

Figure 1.

Although the situation is fairly structured, it affords students the flexibility of choosing three or four of the worst aspects of the situation and describing them at their own levels of proficiency. A beginning ESL student, for example, might include sentences such as "The food was cold. We saw a rat in the restaurant." A more advanced student, on the other hand, might write, "While we were eating, one of the cooks raced out of the kitchen chasing a rat."

4. Picture Completion

Students working in pairs are each given two incomplete pictures, A and B.[3] Without showing each other their drawings, one student completes picture A and the other picture B. Next, each student writes a detailed description of the drawing and exchanges the description with his or her partner. After reading the partner's description, each student must try to complete the other unfinished picture according to the partner's description. Finally, the two drawings are compared. This activity gives students practice in writing descriptions and also reinforces the notion that writing must be done with a reader in mind. It emphasizes that descriptive writing must be accurate and sufficiently detailed to convey a clear image to the reader.

Conclusion

What kinds of classroom activities are likely to build proficiency? It is obvious that the activities for all four skills include some common characteristics.

1. These activities will include relevant vocabulary.
2. The language and situations will be meaningful to the students.
3. There will be real communication.
4. The skills practiced will be those needed in the real world. (Strasheim [27] notes that when we conjugate verbs, we prepare students for a life in which they go out into the world and conjugate verbs.)
5. The activities will practice the skill being learned.

6. The activities will motivate students to learn the language: They will be short, fun or interesting, and have observable outcomes.

Few dispute the idea that students learn what they are taught. If students are taught to become proficient, they will become more proficient. Additionally, by providing a richer, more varied learning environment, students will have more positive and successful experiences in the language classroom. Building for proficiency implies that students will be not only more proficient in the language, but also in the communication skills that are becoming more and more necessary in our shrinking world. Proficiency in language provides proficiency in living.

Notes

1. Omaggio lists the differences between spoken and written discourse (19, p. 123).
2. These activities were developed and presented at several conferences in collaboration with Linda Shinnock of Otterbein College, Westerville, Ohio.
3. Excellent sources for unfinished pictures are the *Anti-Coloring Books* (28).

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5

The Teaching and Testing of Comprehension in Foreign Language Learning

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The term *comprehension* and variants on it such as *comprehensible* (as in *comprehensible input*) have become as much a part of contemporary professional language teaching jargon as *monitor, acquisition, communication,* and *proficiency.* Like the other new vocabulary entries, the construct of *comprehension* has been slow to be operationalized in the research literature. Needless to say, the operationalization of *comprehension* in the clinical or pedagogical literature has been even slower.

The intent of this paper is to outline and to synthesize instructional models for reading and listening comprehension. The instructional procedure outlined is based on immediate recall, a standardized methodology for assessing comprehension in first language (Johnston, 18). The first part of the paper discusses the interrelated processes of reading and listening comprehension as currently defined in the research literature. The second part outlines the instructional procedure itself and offers examples in reading and listening. The third part addresses the issue of testing and scoring comprehension.

What Is Comprehension?

Anderson and Pearson (1)—as well as Rumelhart (28), Graesser (14), Schank (29), Lotman (20), Perkins (24), and Bloome and Green (8)—consider the process of comprehension to be an active constructive one. These scholars utilize, in general, the definition that *comprehension is the process of relating new or incoming information to information already stored in memory.* In other words, comprehension is an active process of matching or of associating. The consensus in the research literature is that understanding or comprehension is not a process of breaking complex units of language into simpler ones, but rather a process of taking multiple units and building them into representations.

An appropriate metaphor for the comprehension process might be the act of putting a jigsaw puzzle together. Trying to match pieces and sometimes forcing mismatched pieces together reflect the nature of the process. At first, one tries to get a sense for the image the puzzle might hold. This process is very slow at first until some glimmer of the whole begins to emerge. At that point, the process speeds up because the sense of the whole guides the use of the parts. However, when an initial "sense of the whole" is faulty, the process can slow down considerably or break down totally—especially when the puzzle constructer is convinced that some of the pieces are either *missing* or were even cut wrong.

Building a sense of the whole or a conceptual representation in comprehension is known as constructing a "model of the discourse." According to Brown and Yule (9, p. 200) "references [during comprehension] are made to the mental representation rather than to the original verbal representation in the text." In other words, much like the person who is convinced that the jigsaw puzzle will reveal a particular picture and therefore chooses pieces based on what he/she thinks the puzzle portrays, the comprehender does not refer to explicit components in a text, but rather to inferences and generalizations about a text's meaning.

The natural process in comprehension of building a conceptual representation and basing decisions on the constructed meaning can lead to a critical consequence. Johnston (18, p. 31) points out that a reader may "build a completely inappropriate model of the text meaning without becoming aware of the problem." He explains that as the reader builds the discourse model, he/she infers within the model and may generate "inappropriate inferences by virtue of the content of the growing model itself" (p. 31).

In summary, the constructive nature of comprehension involves associating concepts. Associations are often guided by what the comprehender decides a text is about. Inferences, then, are based on the comprehender's decisions. These inferences are not necessarily based on the raw material of the text itself.

What Is Second Language Comprehension?

Bernhardt has recently synthesized the knowledge base on second-language reading comprehension (6, 7). While indicating that the knowledge base is meager at best since it is based only on eighty-one data collections, she argues that some generalizations about reading comprehension can be made. These generalizations are (1) that comprehension is topic-dependent, (2) that it involves making appropriate decisions from the beginning of a text, (3) that it involves the selection of critical features for processing, (4) that it involves the rapid processing of text, and (5) that it involves metacognitive awareness of the comprehension process.

The first two generalizations about reading comprehension are indeed parallel to the findings generated by the first-language research findings mentioned above. *What the comprehender already knows*—that is, the information he/she has at hand—*is critical* to the entire process of comprehension. Research from ESL (Carrell, 11, 12; Hudson, 15; Johnson, 16, 17; Steffenson et al. 30; Mohammed and Swales, 22) as well as from foreign language (Bernhardt, 5) indicates that knowledge of a topic or personal experience with a topic increases comprehension. Linguistic competence predicts only infrequently the ability to comprehend a foreign language passage. In like manner, recent research indicates that *initial decisions about the content of a passage play an enormous role* in the constructed understanding of a reader. Bernhardt (5, 6) offers examples of a Wolfgang Borchert text about post–World War II Germany being interpreted as a fable when undergraduate readers saw that the title included the word *Ratten* (rats); and in a text about acid rain, *Waldkrankheit* (forest sickness) was interpreted as *Weltkrankheit* (world sickness).

The third generalization based on reading comprehension research in a second language is that *proficient reading comprehension is dependent upon the identification of critical features* necessary for comprehension. Critical features differ from language to language. Micro elements such as the identification and meaningful processing of inflected endings, for example, have an impact on the ability to comprehend. In like manner, the ability to identify important or higher-level features in text as opposed to less important discourse elements that vary according to language are also critical in proficient text processing.

The *ability to process written texts quickly* seems to be the fourth hallmark of the reading comprehension process in a second language. Slow processing speeds tend to indicate limited comprehension abilities.

Finally, *metacognition or the ability to think about what is being understood* separates good from poor comprehenders. Foreign language learners who are aware of how they are constructing or perceiving an entire text seem also to comprehend at a high level. Such learners tend to comment on how they are understanding by providing data such as question marks and dashes or quizzical looks while they are performing a comprehension task.

These principles were synthesized from data generated by foreign language readers. Few data have been generated by foreign language listeners. While for the present paper the assumption is that the two processes are, in essence, the same, certain variables are indeed different.

Differences between Oral and Written Texts

There are several obvious differences between reading and listening. A printed text must be seen. A spoken text must be heard. A printed text often has additional visual cues, such as type in various sizes, illustrations, tables, and charts. A spoken text has additional audial cues, although these are quite different in nature, such as variations in voice quality, the presence of background noises, variances in pauses, and the like. There are, however, additional differences between reading and listening that are not so obvious.

Rubin (27) presents a theoretical taxonomy of the differences between oral and written language. The taxonomy encompasses seven "medium-related dimensions." Briefly sketched, they are (1) *modality*—there is a fundamental difference between the modality of speech and the modality of writing/printing; (2) *interaction*—the degree of perceived contact between a listener and a speaker and between a reader and a writer are different, in that the contact between a listener and a speaker is immediate and intense, whereas that between a reader and a writer can be reduced, or even suspended at will by the reader; (3) *involvement*—the extent to which the communication directed toward the reader/listener by means of such conventions as "you know" or "you are probably thinking that . . ." etc. varies between the two modalities; (4) *spatial commonality*—the degree to which the participants can actually see each other or at least seem to be able to see each other is perceived differently in the two modalities; (5) *temporal commonality*—the extent to which the participants share the same time frame is radically different in listening and reading; (6) *concreteness of referents*—the objects and events referred to are visually (or audially) present or absent in different ways in listening and reading; and (7) *separability of characters*—the distinction between different people's statements and the degree to which points of view are clearly indicated varies between the two modalities.

Richards (25, 26) has also outlined several major differences between the spoken and written language critical to understanding the differences in processing listening and reading texts. The written language is based primarily upon the sentence, whereas spoken language operates upon the level of the clause. In most written material grammatical conventions are usually carefully observed, whereas at least in spontaneous spoken language there may be many ungrammatical forms, reduced forms, slurrings, elliptical utterances, and repetitions. The written language observes a logical sequence and exhibits planning, whereas in the spoken language pauses, hesitations, false starts, corrections, fillers, and pauses dominate the structure of texts. Written texts are read as if produced by one person (the writer) with considerable internal coherence, but spoken texts often do not appear planned, and the topic of conversation may be negotiated and cooperatively constructed between the listener and the speaker.

Most discussions of listening as contrasted with reading tend to stress listening as part of speaking, that is, when a person is engaged in a conversation or observing a live conversation taking place. However, most of the factors just discussed apply equally well to listening to recorded texts, where there is little opportunity for listeners to participate as speakers in the development of the stream of speech. Taking Byrnes's (10) "four basic modes of speech," based on Beile (2), listening and reading become more like each other as a given text develops from (1) spontaneous free speech, which is highly interactive, through (2) deliberate free speech, with prearranged discourse gambits, such as those found in interviews and panel discussions, through (3) oral presentation of written texts (news broadcasts, lectures, etc.), to, finally, (4) oral presentation of fixed, rehearsed scripts (stage plays, film scripts, etc.).

Because listening involves calling into play those factors inherent in processing all environmental sounds, including those used by the brain to sort out background sounds from human speech, a kind of "internal dialogue" develops between the listener and the speaker (whether physically present or absent), which is not normally present when reading. Using Stevick's (31) terminology, an "image" develops in the mind of the listeners/readers. An "image" is a set of items that "travel together in memory," and can consist of elements that are sensory (things heard, seen, smelled, felt, etc.), emotional (anger, anxiety, relief, joy, etc.), relational (left–right, greater–lesser, older–newer, near–far, etc.), purposive (greeting, avoiding commitment, exchanging information, etc.), and verbal (words, parts of words, combinations of words, etc.). In this connection, Stevick outlines a number of other differences between listening and reading: differences in adjustability of input, in the content of images, in the signals for organization, and in the accessibility.

Summary

Certainly, differences between the processing of oral texts and the processing of written texts serve to complexify the inherently complex process of comprehension. That comprehension is based on what the reader already knows underlines the complexity of the process, for it implies that every individual comes to the comprehension process with something different since every individual has a different structure of experience. In addition, the examinations of written versus oral language imply that two different sorts of processing behaviors are necessitated by the differences in modality. The list of confounding variables is daunting. The road to effective instruction in comprehension must lie in acknowledging individual differences in readers *and* in texts. The value of the immediate recall protocol procedure outlined in this paper resides in its ability to tap and to expose individual comprehension strategies and, thereby, to determine the extent to which adequate and accurate comprehension is occurring.

The Recall Protocol Procedure

Table 1 outlines the immediate recall protocol procedure for *both* reading *and* listening. Bernhardt (3, 6) previously discussed the procedure exclusively for reading.

Table 1
The Immediate Recall Protocol Procedure

Reading

1. Select an unglossed text of approximately 200 words.
2. Tell the students they may read the text as often as necessary and that they will be asked to write down what they recall.
3. Students should be given time to read.
4. Students are asked to write down everything they remember.
5. Students' written protocols are collected.
6. The protocols are used either for an immediate follow-up exercise or for the writing of a future lesson plan that addresses a.) cultural features, b.) conceptual features, c.) grammatical/lexical features that have interfered with comprehension.

Listening

1. Select an unglossed text, with a running time of one to two minutes, at a speed of approximately 200 words per minute.
2. Tell the students that they will hear the text once, but they are not to take written notes.
3. Tell them that when they have finished you will ask them to write down everything they remember from the text.
4. After they have heard the text twice, ask the students to write down everything they remember.
5. Collect the protocols.
6. Use the protocols either for an immediate follow-up exercise or for a future lesson plan that addresses a.) cultural features, b.) conceptual features, c.) grammatical/lexical/phonological features that interfere with comprehension.

In essence, the immediate recall protocol procedure focuses on the manner in which students reconstruct the texts they read or hear. Its intent is to give teachers a sense of *what* foreign language learners are able to gain from additional information about their students' understandings.

Briefly, the procedure involves selecting a text for practice, giving students time to understand the text without interruption, and then giving time for writing a recall protocol that the teacher uses for future lesson plans. Recall protocols are written in English so that students' *productive* skills do not interfere with the analysis of their *comprehension* abilities.

Table 2

A Reading Passage for Comprehension

Industrie und Natur

Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland gehört zu den vier grössten Industrienationen der Erde. Chemie, Autos, und viele andere technische Produkte ernähren das Land. Oft bilden mehrere Industriestädte ein grosses Zentrum: das "Ruhrgebiet," zum Beispiel. Dennoch ist die Bundesrepublik auch ein Land mit viel Wald. Auf 7,2 Milliarden Hektar Fläche stehen 20 Milliarden Bäume. Das sind 1000 Bäume auf drei Menschen.

Industry and Nature (translation)

The Federal Republic of Germany belongs to the four great industrial nations of the world. Chemicals, cars, and many other technical products fortify the land. Often several industrial cities form a large center: the Ruhr area, for example. Nevertheless, the Federal Republic is also a country with a lot of forest. On the 7.2 billion hectares of land are 20 billion trees. That is 1000 trees for every 3 people.

Reading Comprehension

Table 2 contains a passage for reading comprehension, and Table 3, recall protocols of two students.

Table 3

Unedited Recall Protocols of Two High School Readers of German

Student One

First Reading

Industry and Nature. The Bundesrepublic has four of them. Chemistry, cars, . . . and trees. The "Ruhrs______" has.

There are many more trees. There is about three trees to every person.

Second Reading

Industry and Nature. The Bundesrepublic is one of the great cities for Industry. There are four of them chemistry, cars and a few other products. Dennoch is one of the central locations. The "Ruhr arbeit" for example. There are a great many forests. There are from 3,7 million acres. There are 1000 trees to every three people.

Student Two

First Reading
Science and Nature

Germany has many technical capabilities. Three major ones. Science, autos, and electronics. They have large industrial parks.

Second Reading
Science and Nature

West Germany is a scientifically advanced country. Chemistry, Automobiles, and many other international sciences flourish. They have large industrial parks containing 2000 buildings and employing thousands.

The passage stems from a study in which all the texts considered ecology and ecology-related topics. In the study, the readers were asked to read the text as often as they liked in preparation for recall and then to complete a protocol after the text was taken from them. They were told they would have the opportunity to read the text and write a protocol twice.

The completed protocols in Table 3 indicate that the passage was not above the conceptual level of the readers. In other words, the readers were able to come to some understanding of the general theme of the text and that they dealt sensibly, albeit incorrectly at times, with the text.

Student One is the better comprehender. Student One's first protocol indicates an awareness of the basic contrastive structure of the passage and of some details. The second protocol provides greater detail. Notable is Student One's reconciliation of *dennoch* as a city. A credible explanation may be that Student One has learned the lexical entry of *Zentrum* as "city" as in "Stadtzentrum" (city center) and, therefore, used the capitalized word as the name of a city. The visual confusion of *Ruhrgebiet* as *Ruhrarbeit* may have contributed to this understanding.

Student Two also built a conceptual representation of the passage, but like many students, read from his general knowledge rather than from the text. Interestingly, he encodes the obvious cognate *Industrie* as "science" and then later used the word *Industrie* for "industrial parks." Perhaps the student linked the sense of trees and nature to parks; hence, industrial parks, a concept not unknown to many urban and suburban dwellers in North America. In the second reading, Student Two merely fortifies his recall, choosing not to revamp but to supplement his previous conceptual representation. This result is consonant with the findings discussed in part one of this paper.

Perhaps the most important point to be made about these protocols is that they stem from students in the same class. The benefit of looking at recall protocols lies in identifying vocabulary problems, grammar problems, risk taking, and inference strategies in students, as well as their ability to use the structure of the text and titles to come to an understanding. A traditional question–answer format cannot provide this information, especially if it is maintained in the target language. Some examples might serve to illustrate.

Student One, who believed that *Dennoch* was a city, may never have been asked about a city because no city was mentioned in the passage. Obviously, a teacher would not ask the question, so the student could leave the classroom believing that a *city* was mentioned. In like manner, Student Two had the concept of industrial park in his head. Even though a teacher may have asked about numbers of trees per person, the student could have answered the question correctly while still believing that the real discussion was of industrial parks rather than a contrast between industry and nature. Often, conventional questioning does not yield the conceptualizations and beliefs that readers hold about texts.

Listening Comprehension

As with the immediate recall protocol used for reading, the procedures for listening are noticeably similar. Again, of course, there are a number of major differences. A taped text is unlike reading in that it is not realistic to allow students to listen to a taped text as often as they wish. Some students comprehend quite well with only one listening, some with two, some only with many listenings. Since the stream of speech is temporally linear, and not subject to the same kind of multiple holistic visualizations possible in a short time with reading, a convention had to be established, whereby the length of the text would be kept very short (no more than two minutes running time) but played only twice, once to familiarize the students with the text, and once to help them establish a mental structure with which to retain aspects of the text needed for generating a protocol.

In addition, in the case of listening it may be necessary to give students those lexical items that might unduly slow down processing and retention. For example, proper names, including place names not readily recognized, are best written on the blackboard or in a worksheet, especially for students in beginning courses of instruction. With more advanced students this may not be necessary, of course, since they will know enough to realize that the specific spelling and pronunciation of a proper name is probably not relevant to overall comprehension. In the case of the sample text presented in Table 4, the students were told ahead of time the names of the two people involved ("Martin Schlichenmeyer" and "Helga Kunold"), but not, of course, what their relationship to each other was. They were also told that they would hear the names of three German cities ("Berlin," "Göttingen," and "Stuttgart"), but, again, not what the cities had to do with the two people in the dialogue.

Table 4
A Listening Passage for Comprehension

Dialogue between Two Students in Berlin

Martin.	Servus, ich heiße Martin Schlichenmeyer.
Helga.	Morgen, mein Name ist Helga, Helga Kunold.
M.	Wo kommst du eigentlich her?
H.	Ich bin aus Göttingen. Und du?
M.	Ich komme aus der Gegend von Stuttgart. Bist du jetzt schon lange in Berlin?
H.	Nein, ich bin gerade jetzt angekommen. Ich kenne mich noch nicht so sehr gut aus. Die Stadt ist so groß. Kannst du mir vielleicht helfen?
M.	Ja, nach der Vorlesung, gerne.
H.	Gut, dann schauen wir etwas in der Stadt herum.
M.	OK!

From Claire Kramsch and Ellen Crocker. *Reden Mitreden Dazwischenreden*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle, 1985.

Translation

Martin.	Hello, my name is Martin Schlichenmeyer.
Helga.	Morning, my name is Helga, Helga Kunold.
M.	Where do you come from?
H.	I'm from Göttingen. And you?

M. I come from the area around Stuttgart. Have you been in Berlin long?
H. No, I just arrived. I don't know my way around yet. The city is so big. Can you help me maybe?
M. Yes, after the lecture, gladly.
H. Good, then let's look at something in the city.
M. OK!

Table 5
Unedited Recall Protocols of College Learners of German

Listener SN

1. My name is Martin. 2. My name is Helga. 3. Where are you from(?) 4. I am from Göttingen. And you? have you been here (Berlin) long. 5. I come from near Stuttgart. Have you been here long. 6. No, only a short time. The city is so big. Can you help show me around? 7. Yes, after the lecture. [25]

Listener PB

Martin S. meets Helga K. at the Uni in Berlin. Martin asks Helga where she is from. She answers Göttingen. She says she is new in Berlin and does not know her way around. He will show her around the city after the lecture. [22]

Listener NG

They said good morning to each other. She is from Göttingen and he is from (der nähe von) Stuttgart. They were going somewhere and they were going to talk after the Vorliesen. [12]

Listener AJ

Her name is Helga. She is new in Stuttgart. She asks Martin for help, and he offers to read something aloud to her. [9]

The four sample protocols in Table 5 indicate similarities in student recognition of the overall structure of the dialogue, but show many differences in the retention of specific details. All subjects realized, for example, that two people, a man and a woman, were having a conversation about something that the woman did not know well; in most cases, subjects realized that the "something" was a city, and that the man would show her around the city, although not right away. Listener SN chose to arrange the protocol as a series of numbered statements; most other listeners chose a prose style. Listener PB suggested that the two persons in the dialogue are students ("at the Uni in Berlin"); most of the others did not mention this fact, which, admittedly, is not explicit from the facts in the dialogue, but which is an accurate hypothesis from all the statements made by both persons. One student (Listener AJ), however, understood from the dialogue only that Martin would help Helga, but by reading something to her, an obvious misunderstanding of the noun *Vorlesung* ("lecture"), which comes from the verb *vorlesen* ("to read aloud" or "to lecture"). Similarly, Listener NG recognized the word "Vorlesung" but rendered it as "Vorliesen," thus probably indicating that he/she did not know what the word meant.

Lesson Planning

Recall protocols give teachers a sense of what *real* learners do with *real* texts when they are given an opportunity to read or to listen on their own without interference and interruption. Protocols then provide valuable information to teachers by affording them the opportunity of customizing instruction to individual student needs and of avoiding unnecessary and time-consuming exercises on material students may already know.

The students who generated the reading recall protocols have some vocabulary problems; notably, however, they each have *different* ones. Their teacher should provide a lesson on the semantic domains of *Industrie* and *Zentrum*, for example. In addition, a discussion of "industrial parks" and their counterparts in West German culture should also be undertaken. Finally, instruction in the use of text structure as an aid in increasing comprehension should be given.

In like manner, the students who generated the listening recall also have vocabulary problems. Their teacher, for example, should provide a lesson on the semantic domain of *Vorlesung* vs. *vorlesen*. While semantically there is *some* overlap, that overlap caused some comprehension difficulties for the students. In addition, student PB should be praised for his/her inference and a discussion should ensue about the appropriateness of the inference.

Brief analyses such as the ones above can provide considerable and useful information to teachers. Bernhardt (6, p. 112) cited further advantages of using the immediate recall protocol procedure for the instruction of comprehension:

> It cuts the amount of preparation time for teacher-generated materials for comprehension practice since the students provide the raw materials for a . . . lesson and also indicate which exercises are appropriate. . . . it provides concrete, student-generated data on comprehension difficulties . . . it focuses

> student attention directly on meaning, rather than focusing it on individual units of text which the teacher picks out based on his or her background.

Yet the technique is not only appropriate for teaching, but also for testing. It is to testing that this paper now turns.

Scoring Recall Protocols

Texts have internal structures and can therefore be broken down into "idea units" (Bernhardt, 3; Meyer, 21). There are numerous methodologies for breaking texts into units so that they can be scored. Briefly, the text is divided into a hierarchy of ideas with certain ideas of more central importance to the text than others. Tables 6 and 7 illustrate the scoring instruments used for the recall protocol passages illustrated in this paper. Table 6 lists the idea units in the reading passage. Student One receives a score of 19 on the passage and Student Two a score of 10 on the second reading. The scoring procedure taps the fact that the readers were able to grasp the intent of the text to an extent but simultaneously does not reward Student Two for reading from his background rather than from the text.

Table 6
Scoring Instrument for the Reading Passage

Points	*Phrase*
(5) ______	industry and nature in BRD
(4) ______	great industrial nations
(3) ______	one of four
(2) ______	many products
(2) ______	chemicals
(2) ______	cars
(2) ______	others
(2) ______	industrial cities
(2) ______	great center
(1) ______	Ruhrgebiet
(4) ______	lots of forest
(3) ______	7.2 billion
(2) ______	20 billion trees
(2) ______	1000 trees/3 persons

Table 7
Scoring Instrument for Listening Passage

(4) _____ two students talk
(3) _____ they introduce themselves
(2) _____ he is a young man
(1) _____ Martin
(1) _____ Schlichenmeyer
(2) _____ he comes from a city
(1) _____ he comes from Stuttgart
(1) _____ he comes from near Stuttgart
(2) _____ she is a young woman
(1) _____ Helga
(1) _____ Kunold
(2) _____ she comes from a city
(1) _____ Göttingen
(3) _____ he asks her how long she's been here
(2) _____ if she has been here long
(1) _____ in Berlin
(3) _____ she wants him to help her
(2) _____ she has not been here long
(2) _____ she does not know her way around
(1) _____ very well
(2) _____ the city is big
(1) _____ so (too) big
(2) _____ can he help her?
(1) _____ yes
(1) _____ after the lecture
(2) _____ let's look at something
(1) _____ in the city

Table 7 lists the scoring format for the listening passage. Each specific fact is weighted as "1." The larger topics are weighted as "3." Each specific question or change in topic is weighted as "2." Only the fact that the two people in the dialogue are supposed to be students would be weighted more ("4"), because this fact is implicit, calling for a global comprehension of the text. True, many people might conclude that the two people are students but understand very little about the text. The points scored, however, are cumulative across levels. For example, Listener PB earned 22 points, 4 for identifying the speakers as students, 3 for the fact that they were introducing themselves, 2 for each specific topic recalled, and 1 for each specific fact noted.

Conclusion

Needs-centered instruction has become practically axiomatic in the research and clinical literature in second and foreign language. Corder (13, p. 77) underlines the point:

> Efficient language teaching must work with, rather than against, natural processes, facilitate and expedite rather than impede learning. Teachers and teaching materials must adapt to the learner rather than vice-versa. . . . What has been discovered so far suggests that the nearer we can approximate language teaching to the learning of second languages in an informal setting the more successful we shall be.

The intent of utilizing recall as a teaching device in second-language comprehension is to reflect naturally occurring processes in comprehension. In particular, the procedure in both its teaching and testing dimensions reflects what is known about the constructive nature of the comprehension process. The authors hope that the recall protocol procedure in reading and listening contributes substantially to an era that calls for a theoretically sound pedagogy developed from a theoretically sound data base.

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6

Using Plays Proficiently in the Foreign Language Class

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Choosing Plays

Reading a play from time to time in the secondary foreign language class makes a pleasant change of pace from other kinds of activities, provided that the play has been chosen with attention to the class level for which it is intended. Ideally, all plays, as well as other kinds of literature presented in the foreign language program, appear in the curriculum as a result of carefully planned objectives that span the entire foreign language sequence. Thus, when students begin a play, they will have the linguistic proficiency necessary to read it without the undue frustration that comes from having to look up too many unknown words and phrases. Their first experience is probably the most important in shaping their attitudes about reading more plays in the target language. As Marzi (6, p. 125) cautions,

> It is well that students be introduced to a work that is easily understood, and therefore possibly appreciated, than to have them study a difficult work . . . which would close the door to any present or future interest.

There are many ways in which teachers can determine whether a text is appropriate for a certain level. For example, a readability formula can be used to evaluate the linguistic suitability of a given text; Schulz (10) describes one such formula, the Lix, which is suitable for French, German, and Spanish prose.[1] Purcell (9) suggests other factors that may be considered in choosing a play: class interests, suitability of the subject matter with which it deals, and the amount of time available for discussion in class. For those plays that are to be among the early reading experiences of the students, it is generally wise to choose contemporary works that have characters with whom students can identify, and if there is some humor, so much the better. Tragedy, plays written in verse or highly colloquial language, or stylized pieces that depend heavily upon a knowledge of the social customs of a historical period for their understanding should be saved for much later.

Providing Background

After selecting a play suitable for a given level, a careful introduction to its reading helps ensure the students' understanding and enjoyment of the work. This introduction may take a wide variety of forms, depending on the type of play under consideration. Hunting (2, p. 538) proposes a number of preliminary meetings devoted to studying in the target language "the theater, its techniques, its vocabulary, the particular author in question, his period, his play, and its possible different interpretations."

Linguistic preparation is also a major consideration if the students will encounter unfamiliar language or verb forms in the play. For example, because of a reduced emphasis on the *vosotros* form in many Spanish programs in the United States, students who read a peninsular play for the first time may need some work with the new verb forms likely to be encountered. For the most part, however, the language structures encountered in a play are less difficult than those in a novel because lengthy narratives containing passages laced with descriptive adjectives or difficult metaphors—seldom used in conversation—occur less frequently. The exception is the play written in verse (often a "classic"), where special attention to the poetic forms used will probably be needed.

Some information of a historical or geographical nature is also frequently useful to help put the play's events into proper perspective. Alternatively, the students themselves can undertake, either individually or in groups, some directed research on these topics to share with the class. As Lewis (5, p. 251) points out, "In order to place literature in its proper milieu, either as part of or as a rejection of a social order, it is essential for a student, and especially today's student to understand what is called the culture and civilization of the particular country." This might include a discussion of a political system, regional customs concerning courtship, or the expectations about the roles of the sexes—any factor that will affect the motivations and actions of the characters in an important way. Because students tend to interpret the behavior of characters in a play from their own personal perspective, it often helps to provide insight into the constraints the culture has imposed upon the characters, and where appropriate, the playwright.

An interesting experiment by Nacci (8), in which he gave a surprise exam to 41 advanced undergraduate students to find out what Hispanic cultural insights they had gained from reading contemporary plays and novels in Spanish, revealed that while the students' cultural impressions were not necessarily valid, they still formed definite opinions, even without the help of the instructor. Although of course very limited in scope, the experiment suggests that teachers need to deal with cultural topics directly in order to avoid the erroneous conclusions that students might draw if left without appropriate guidance.

Cultural background can also be provided through visual media such as slides, movies, and television. The ready availability of videocassettes makes commercial films easier to use than ever, and a widening market means that a number of films on videotape are becoming available for use to provide background information of a cultural nature. Photographic slide units are still easiest for the individual teacher to prepare. With just a camera and an outline of useful slides, the teacher who visits the site where the play takes place can prepare an interesting and pointed narrative to illustrate prominent references in the play. The author prepared such a unit for *Corona de sombra (Shadow Crown)*, by the Mexican playwright Rodolfo Usigli, a play to be read by classes in the second semester of the third year. The title of the play refers to the brief reign (1864–1867) of the Austrian Archduke Maximilian as Emperor of Mexico; the action takes place primarily in Chapultepec Castle in Mexico City. Slides of the castle and grounds, its chief rooms of state, and portraits of the major characters help the students visualize the setting that the playwright envisioned for his scenes depicting the emperor's tumultuous reign.

Setting the Stage

After providing useful cultural and historical background, students need to be sensitized to the idea of the play as a literary work that is designed to be seen and heard. Therefore, when the class begins a play, it is useful to discuss, for example, the advantages the playwright has over a novelist, the disadvantages the playwright faces, and the restrictions that the playwright must observe when writing a play. Because of the visual qualities inherent in drama, it becomes equally important to visualize the set. As Marzi (6, p. 126) suggests,

> The student as reader should be encouraged to see himself or herself as a spectator, and to imagine what is taking place on the stage. This role gives new life to the text and prompts the students to be more creative in their thinking.

To help students visualize the setting, it is occasionally possible to provide the class with actual photographs of a production of the play. Because such photographs are not usually readily available, the construction of a diagram of the set according to the playwright's instructions becomes more expedient. This exercise helps not only to imagine the set, but also how the actors will move about, where they will be for important speeches, and the like. The teacher and the class should agree on certain conventional symbols on the diagram to represent doors, windows, kinds of furniture, etc., so that succeeding diagrams are quickly understood by all. Because stage language is somewhat technical, it is also necessary to introduce the students to this new terminology.

The teacher and class can construct the diagram of the first set together, perhaps on the chalkboard or an overhead projection. For succeeding scenes students can prepare their own diagrams first, then compare them with others in the class. The diagrams are useful while the students read the play and can serve as the basis for discussions after the play is read.

Students can also be asked to find pictures of people in magazines who they believe resemble the characters; the class can then vote on the best set of pictures. The pictures can be mounted on posterboard and moved around on the chalkboard with magnets (or masking tape if the chalkboard is not magnetized) to show the characters' positions and movements in key scenes; Allen and Valette (1, p. 280) suggest that a flannel board be employed for the same purpose.

Discussing Plays

The three major components for the critique of a play are the same as they would be for the novel: plot, characterization, and setting. Of these, characterization generally assumes more importance than the other two simply because the characters are so visible and because the play is developed through dialogue rather than narration. As a result, discussion about the characters is generally the easiest to elicit. Students should consider who the protagonist is and what that person hopes to achieve in the play. Students need to understand that the protagonist can also be more than one person or even a group of people. The one who tries to prevent the protagonist from reaching his or her goal is then identified as the antagonist, which may be something other than a person—animals, ghosts, or the environment, perhaps. Characters may be compared and contrasted and analyzed from the point of view of their motivation and their importance to the plot. In this regard, consideration can be given to the minor characters: Why are they included? What do they contribute? Often a minor character has some key role to play in the resolution of the plot.

The importance of the setting should also be considered. The setting can have considerable impact on the action in the drama if it restricts the characters' movements in some way. For example, plays set in a historical period must conform to the conventions of that time, and the characters will be limited by the social expectations of the period. Similarly, if the setting is physically hostile to the characters—astronauts about to run out of oxygen on the moon, children lost in a forest, travelers stranded in the desert with little water—it will have a significant effect on what takes place. Often, however, the setting is of minor importance and students realize that the play could easily take place in any number of settings. If this is the case, students might speculate about why a certain setting was chosen by the author and whether the play might be equally or more effective in another.

A discussion of plot development will also include a consideration of literary devices such as climax, dénouement, empathy, pathos, and symbolism. Because of the dramatic value of certain scenes, students will often identify one of them erroneously as the climax if they have not first determined that the climax is the point in the play where the protagonist either achieves his or her goal or the goal is irretrievably lost, perhaps with the death of the protagonist. The dénouement, or falling action, is then the part that explains what happens to the other characters. Not all plays have a dénouement, of course, and students could speculate about its absence.

Empathy, or the identification by members of the audience with certain characters in the play so that the observers feel themselves to be part of the action, is essential for the play to be a critical success. The really successful play projects empathy for its characters through merely reading it: the actual presentation of the play only serves to reinforce the empathy more strongly. Students should discuss whether or not they felt empathy while reading the play. Because the personal reactions of students to a play will differ, what will strike a chord in one student will be missed entirely by another. Therefore, discussions on empathy are often marked by a divergence of opinion.

Pathos, the ability of the author to have the reader or spectator feel pity for one or more of the characters, is closely allied to empathy. Used skillfully, pathos can bring tears to the eyes of the onlooker; if it is forced or artificial, however, the results will be bathos, or excessive sentimentalism, such as is often encountered in farce or melodrama. Instead of feeling sorry for the characters, the audience laughs at them.

Sometimes symbolism, unless it is very obvious, is often missed entirely by students. The reason that a character appears dressed in a certain color, for example, might have to be explained or, at least, indicated by asking questions about what the color might signify. The fact that the heroine first appears dressed in white may indicate her innocence; later, a red dress might show her loss of that quality; and still later a black dress might symbolize repentance. Physical symbolism of this kind, though, is much easier for the students to recognize than what might be termed "metaphoric" symbolism—when a character is symbolic of some quality less obvious, such as fate or death.[2]

Although a certain amount of the critique of a play should be from the individual point of view, students will find it enjoyable and profitable to work in small groups to debate in the target language topics of discussion or to react to two or three questions concerning the areas discussed above. Students are told that, as a group, they should respond to the topics, but that whatever stance they take must be validated from the text of the play if they are challenged, either by the teacher or their fellow classmates. Typically, small group discussions last between twenty and thirty minutes, after which the teacher asks for group summaries. Groups frequently take differing positions on a topic and a lively discussion ensues.

For more advanced classes, Klein (3) approaches the critique of a play on an individualized basis, requiring the use of all four skills: students read the text for a written test, listen to an audio tape of the play for an identification test, give an oral presentation of a five-minute segment from the play, and write a two-page paper on an approved topic.

An excellent means for provoking discussion is to use recordings of the play in class, whether audio, video, or film. Audio recordings help to provide an appreciation of the dramatic force of the play and an acquaintance with special speech patterns characteristic of the stage, but nothing has an impact on the student like seeing the play once it has been read and discussed and to see it spring to life. In this respect, the most useful medium is the videocassette, because of its versatility and the ease of rewinding it to view a particular part again. As Svensson (11, p. 149) advocates,

> Video helps to make complex verbal situations, relations, and procedures more understandable; it encourages creativity, it simplifies and clarifies foreign conditions, and it overcomes distances of time and space. All this should result in creating a favorable attitude toward the language and culture.

Student Dramatizations

Dramatizations of all or a portion of a play are also worthwhile learning experiences for students, whether in-class enactments or more formal productions for an outside audience. In addition to the insights that the production of a play provides about the playwright, characterization, and staging, it also allows considerable practice in the target language. Hunting (2), who has directed plays in French, maintains that working in the target language allows for constant linguistic practice, thereby increasing students' vocabulary and improving their fluency. The language thus becomes a working tool rather than an academic exercise.

Because class time is limited, the teacher needs to decide in advance which plays lend themselves best to class participation and dramatization. Miller (7, p. 110) offers some practical advice and suggests questions that teachers should consider before choosing a play: (1) Who are the potential actors, and what are they capable of? (2) For whom will the play be performed? (3) What kind of play will suit the performance space available? and (4) How much rehearsal time can be given to the students?

After the play has been chosen, the teacher can select scenes for students to present, or groups of students can choose a scene from the play to enact. Each choice should have the approval of the teacher so that the scenes represent approximately the same amount of work. If the characters in a play have different amounts of dialogue, then one student can play two of the shorter roles. In order to focus on staging and characterization, it is better to ask students to memorize their roles, again ensuring that everyone memorize the same amount. Levy (4) suggests that the class be divided into groups of five to eight students to read four one-act contemporary plays with between two and five characters each. Students who do not have speaking roles are in charge either of class discussions about the author's style and major themes or of presentations about the author's life. The groups then make videotapes of their plays for viewing by the class, and each actor is responsible for presenting in the target language an analysis of the role he or she portrayed.

Videotaping of the scenes enacted by the students creates enthusiasm and adds a note of realism to the task; furthermore, students can discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their own performances, perhaps from the point of view of the playwright or director of the play. Although less desirable, audiotaping can also be of some value in creating interest in the activity. If a class or group of students is particularly enthusiastic about dramatizations, they can be asked to present scenes not only to their own class but also to other classes or an outside audience.

In the event that the play or selected scenes are shown to others, everyone should have clearly defined responsibilities with some announced penalty for failure to perform them. Students should try out for roles and volunteer for other jobs according to their abilities and interests. Those who are not actors can help with staging, costumes, makeup, props, and lighting. All students should, of course, receive a share of the credit in the program. For the teacher who is a novice director, a one-act play is perhaps a good first attempt. Often teachers discover that it does not take long to "take to" directing, especially if there are some talented drama students in the class who can offer advice and practical help. In fact, the teacher might well want to turn over directing duties to a student or students willing to assume the task.

Conclusion

The inclusion of plays in the foreign language curriculum can result in some of the most rewarding literary experiences for students. Using plays proficiently in the classroom can be greatly enhanced if the play is carefully chosen to suit the students' abilities, interests, and level of maturity. Pertinent cultural and historical background, adequate linguistic preparation, and the preparation of diagrams of the stage settings establish a solid basis for critiquing the play and discussing characterization, setting, plot, and literary devices. As already mentioned, a pleasurable concluding activity can be some form of dramatization, either in class or, more ambitiously, for an outside audience. In addition, students will benefit greatly from the experience, acquiring not only more proficiency in the target language but also a deeper appreciation of the many possibilities to be found in drama. All of which may cause students to echo in their own words the well-known sentiment of one of the world's greatest playwrights: "The play's the thing."[3]

Notes

1. For application of the Lix to French, German, and Spanish text, Bruce A. Beatie, Laura Martin, and Bethany Oberst, of Cleveland State University, in "Repetitions, Recognition, and Redundancy: A Pilot Experiment in Second-Language Reading Skills," a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, 1982, found that Spanish functions like German

with the Lix as Schulz describes it, but for the French, words with apostrophes (e.g., *l'école*) and hyphenated words (e.g., *au-dessus*) must be counted as two words rather than as single words.

2. A play replete in metaphoric symbolism is the one-act drama *Los fantoches* (*The Puppets*) by the Guatemalan dramatist Carlos Solorzano.
3. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, II, ii, 641.

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7

The VCR Revolution: Feature Films for Language and Cultural Proficiency

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It is difficult to imagine having to persuade a language teacher of the advantages of feature films. How many times have most of us found ourselves watching a foreign movie we would never have chosen to attend if it had been made in the United States simply because it puts us in direct touch with the authentic patterns of speech and cultural milieu of the language we teach. For an hour we become part of the audience of native speakers the film was produced to entertain.

There are two reasons more use has not been made of films in the past. First, the expense and inconvenience of mail-order rental and the need for unwieldy projection equipment have discouraged many. Second, the element that makes feature films so attractive—the fact that they are intended for an audience that is linguistically and culturally competent—becomes an obstacle. Considerable adaptation is required before they are accessible to an audience of language learners with rudimentary experience in the target culture. The VCR Revolution has all but solved the first problem; reasonably priced cassettes can be shown with little technical expertise. However, the challenge of transforming a film designed to entertain one audience into a learning experience for another remains. Both the entertainment and instructional potential of a movie are diminished when we show it to an unprepared class with the vague expectation of stimulating discussion afterwards.

The goal of this article is to summarize some strategies that promote effective use of feature films in the classroom. They have been selected to illustrate two components. The first is *active viewing* rather than merely viewing for entertainment. This requires ample preparation by students before seeing the film, preparation for which the instructor is responsible. The second, *viewing as a learning experience*, expands students' cultural awareness and ability to use the target language.

A Model

The list of activities to be presented in this article is, of course, far from exhaustive. Nonetheless, organizing the suggestions around a grid that generates a comprehensive model provides some assurance that the range of strategies is as broad as possible. This grid (Figure 1) includes the following:

1. It incorporates the productive and receptive skills that will be engaged during the activities. Observing is included among the receptive skills along with listening and reading. The ability to recognize proxemics, gestures, and body language is now acknowledged as a necessary competence by language specialists. Observation also extends beyond paralinguistic features to the wealth of visual information the film contains.
2. It also takes into account three phases that come into play when active viewing is joined to language learning:
   Previewing. This preparatory stage supplies all information needed to appreciate the film (vocabulary, cultural background, and story line) and acquaints students with the topics to be discussed after having viewed it.
   Focused viewing. This is the most neglected phase; it includes activities to promote close attention while watching the film, and by extension brief activities that grow out of closely observing short segments.
   Postviewing. These strategies integrate and expand the students' observations or include various spinoff activities.

Two other areas are stressed in discussing the film: the story itself (along

Figure 1. Grid of Activities

	Productive speaking / writing	*Receptive* listening / reading / observing
Previewing		
Focused Viewing		
Postviewing		

with its cinematographic presentation) and its cultural setting. The suggestions are geared for the most part to intermediate students and are inspired by experiments with video in third-semester French classes at our university. Some, however, are more suitable for higher levels.

Considerations and Cautions

The allure of the feature film for introducing students to the second culture is so strong that a caveat is perhaps in order. Some years ago French moviegoers were asked to give their definition of cinema for a poll published in the newsmagazine *L'Express*. Fifty-four percent opted for a definition of escapist entertainment—"the possibility of escaping from everyday life." Thirty-one percent identified it with "a means of learning new things," while only 15 percent saw it as "the representation of life as it is lived" (Heymann, 3, p. 126). Although this is only one country, and the foreign films that reach the United States market in cassette form are not necessarily typical of their country's production, such figures should give us pause. It may be that films that seem to make us observers, even participants in the most intimate moments of life in the other culture, are not representations of life as it is lived.

The illusion stems from the fact that the movie camera confers on the object it represents a second presence so immediate that it rivals the object itself. Producers of space odysseys or horror films exploit this immediacy to give credence to the incredible. The conventions of many movie genres that are much less far-fetched require that no matter how exceptional the events in the film might be, the settings should convey an air of verisimilitude that can be transferred to the plot and characterization.

The director's effort to evoke an authentic background provides a wealth of surface detail about daily life—the typical patterns of dress, food, transportation, etc.—that the target audience is expected to recognize as true to life. This authenticity at times extends to deeper cultural elements—including social roles and institutions, the value system, attitudes, or world view. It is perhaps more common, however, for the characters to act out their values in ways that involve some departure from the average or the typical. Many films are designed like comedies to evoke a degree of fear in the audience, or like sentimental romances to embellish some hard reality, or to provide the excitement of the extraordinary to enliven an otherwise humdrum existence as adventure films do. Feature films are not mirrors that reflect cultural values objectively from a neutral vantage point. As part of the culture that produced them, they must be interpreted in terms of their function within the culture.[1]

The fact that feature films are not documentaries, not anthropological slices of life, makes them all the more useful to language teachers. The ultimate fascination is to go beyond the surface detail that often does have documentary value to identify the deeper cultural meanings the film represents. This process requires students to investigate more comprehensive and objective sources of information to put the movie's presentation in a broader light through reading assignments, research projects, or oral reports.

Second, especially in cases where the instructor prefers not to delve too deeply into these questions, it is completely appropriate to handle the film's theme, plot, and characterization in terms of what a movie is above all—a work of art. Cinematographic storytelling resembles drama and narrative fiction enough for teachers with some literary training to be at ease with it. How the director activates comic or melodramatic effects, techniques of character presentation, or the relation of plot to theme are all areas that can be treated. Indeed, using the feature film as a bridge between language and literary study has been proposed. Finally, some instructors may wish to give attention to the uniquely cinematographic elements involved in representing events on the screen. Among those aspects that might be discussed are consideration of the film's genre, montage, and the director's place in cinema history.

Tactical Considerations

It is probably just as well that most class periods are too short to show an entire movie. Class time is usually better spent in preparing for or reacting to the film than in devoting large blocks of time to viewing. In some situations it might be appropriate to reserve all class time for working with portions of the screenplay or cultural readings related to the film. In one course, for example, the movie was shown outside of class; students were expected to see it at their own convenience to prepare for a concluding general discussion. At the other extreme, Garrity (2, p. 41) reports dividing an entire film, Jean Renoir's *La Grande Illusion,* into short segments that were shown to each class over the course of a semester. When working with such brief segments, Willis (8, p. 45) suggests a maximum length of twelve minutes for video scenes, though in most cases the selections will range between one and five minutes. This time period is short enough for students to maintain a high degree of concentration and long enough to provide a coherent exchange of dialogue within the sequence. Even if the scene is shown several times within the same class period, a short fragment allows ample time for activities that reinforce it. After students have worked with selected scenes from the film in such an intense way, they should be allowed the opportunity to catch the sweep of the film by seeing it in one sitting if possible. As will be seen in more detail, video can make a contribution at all stages of film study: during the previewing phase as an attention-getter or tease; as a preliminary to skill-building activities during focused viewing; and in the postviewing period, a screening of the entire movie can set the stage for synthesis and summary.[2]

Previewing

One of the major goals of previewing is to prepare students for active viewing activities. For example, students are often so intimidated by the pace of the dialogue that they glue their eyes to the subtitles with the result that great portions of the visual and auditory elements of the film pass by them unnoticed. Previewing activities reduce this tension by familiarizing students with aspects of the movie that are likely to prove problematic and thus prepare them for high-quality postviewing discussion.

1. **Linguistic Features.** It is useful to distinguish between features students must recognize to follow the dialogue and vocabulary needed to describe objectives or actions portrayed visually in the film. When students do not have the opportunity to read the screenplay, lexical items can be summarized in lists or preferably presented in context by quoting sentences or fragments from the film. Slang expressions are an example of a typical difficulty. While some instructors may prefer that

students limit their use of slang, movies are ideal for observing slang used in an authentic context. Regional accents can also pose problems. Because phonological analysis is out of place at this level, it might be helpful for students to see the text or hear it pronounced in the standard manner so that they will recognize it in the film.

Descriptions of objects or actions in the film are more successful if activities use vocabulary that students already know (meals, family relationships, transportation, etc.). If necessary, lists can be used to remind students of previously learned words or to expand their vocabularies; or better yet, pertinent items can be incorporated into questions and other written materials.

2. **Culture and History.** Reading lessons or oral reports can be organized around themes suggested by the film. The goal might simply be to orient the students or to provide more extensive information on a topic in order to fit the film's treatment into a broader perspective. A ready source of such readings is the instructor's collection of desk copies of textbooks. With luck a suitable passage adapted to the level of the class can be found there.

3. **Scene Previews.** Previewing selected scenes will put students more at ease when they see them in the context of the entire film. Exposition scenes or episodes that are crucial to plot development might be shown. Previewing is also an excellent introduction to the study of the screenplay because it allows the students to visualize the characters and setting. Before they read a scene, students might be shown the preceding scene or the beginning of the one they will be assigned. Another possibility is to show the video but turn down the sound while covering up any subtitles.

4. **Reading the Screenplay.** Access to the script is an advantage to instructors because in its absence it is necessary to take extensive notes when previewing the film to prepare teaching materials. In those cases where the screenplay has been published, it also opens up a wealth of opportunities for developing reading, speaking, and even listening and writing skills. The screenplay can also be used for work in oral interpretation and pronunciation. For example, the instructor can read portions aloud to test oral comprehension or give students written passages with words omitted for them to fill in as a writing exercise.

5. Character List and Plot Summary. If students are going to study disconnected scenes from the film before viewing it in its entirety, a synopsis of the plot can be helpful. A summary like those in TV guides that leave the outcome in suspense can provide preliminary orientation or a more detailed one could serve as a guide to keep viewers abreast of the story line.

6. Cinematographic Topics. For those instructors wishing to emphasize the art of filmmaking, consideration of the director's style, the conventions of the film genre, or the traditions of cinema in that particular country will enhance a more technical approach to the movie. Background reading or oral reports could be used to introduce this topic. The film's credits can serve as an initial presentation of the needed technical vocabulary.

7. Introducing the Postviewing Activities. In a very real sense these preparatory activities in the first phase are designed to ensure the success of the ones in the concluding phase. Students must be alerted early on to the information they will need to perform well in the final stage.

Focused Viewing

Active viewing is directed viewing that sharpens students' listening, reading, and observation skills by focusing their attention on items that might otherwise be lost in the unfamiliar and often intimidating world they find in the foreign film. The following activities work best when the film is broken down into segments, but more general questions along the same lines can be devised if students watch the movie only in one sitting. In that case more detailed observations like the ones below might be assigned to groups. Any kind of exercise that does not require extensive writing can be adapted for these purposes: identifications, multiple choice, true–false statements, fill-in-the-blanks, and even drawings in some cases.

Listening Activities

1. When students have not been able to study the text of the dialogue ahead of time, giving them exercises incorporating

generous samples of the vocabulary used by the actors helps them recognize the words they hear.

2. In order to focus attention on specific linguistic features, students might be asked to jot down examples of slang, formal expressions, regional accents, familiar versus formal second-person use, etc. Alternatively, they might be given lists of such items that appear in a scene and asked to note which characters use them.
3. Students can also be asked to search for examples of various expressions used to convey some idea or emotion, e.g., agreement, fear, surprise, optimism, etc.
4. With more advanced classes, if the movie contains examples of extended discourse (e.g., speeches and lectures), note-taking is in order. This is especially appropriate when the situation in real life might require note-taking skill—for example, a press conference.

Reading Activities

It is not uncommon for movies to require some degree of reading skill—and not only for reading the credits. The text of letters and documents or plot summaries, for example, may be shown on the screen. Deciphering them often presents special difficulties to language learners who cannot process the written text fast enough, especially if it is complicated by an unfamiliar style of script. In addition, shorter written fragments—street signs, billboards, store names—that contain important clues are often overlooked by students.

True–false or multiple-choice exercises can draw attention to crucial points within such documents needed to follow the plot. Since glancing at a handout will distract students from reading the text on screen, the instructor might read aloud such exercises. If the VCR has a freeze-frame control, it can be used to extend students' reading time.

Observation Activities

1. Provide students with two lists, one of gestures and body language and the other of emotions; as they watch the film they

match the two, noting the characters and situations in play; more advanced students need only be given one of the lists. The same can be done for more ritualized gestures like shaking hands or the French exchange of *bises*. Video is the ideal medium for examining how gestures, proxemics, posture, and other paralinguistic features supplement verbal language or in many cases replace it entirely. A strategy for making this clear to students is to play a segment twice. During the first time with no sound, students try to identify the emotions conveyed by the characters' body language; the scene is then repeated with sound to check their findings.

2. Fashion-conscious students can follow the wardrobe of a character, jotting down the activities that call for a change of apparel. If difficult vocabulary is involved, a handout might describe the clothing so that students merely note the situation.
3. In order to draw attention to the physical setting—whether street scenes, the interior of homes, workplaces, or public buildings—students can list differences between similar locations in the United States. If the film presents more than one example of the same type of setting, the segments containing them can be compared—a middle class and lower class home, a modern and an older school building, etc.
4. Everyday events such as meals, classroom procedures, marriages, trials, etc. allow for the same kinds of comparison with American culture and of multiple examples within the target culture. Another approach is for the handout to list all the typical components of such an event; students then check off the ones found in the film. Alternatively, the handout might list such components in random order and the students arrange them in the sequence they occur in the film.
5. True–false statements targeting events in the plot that are conveyed without any dialogue test whether students can recognize the necessary vocabulary without any verbal cue within the movie.
6. A similar exercise can be done based on characterization. Students receive brief written descriptions of various characters and match each description with the character's name.

Participation Activities

The activities just discussed are designed to promote attentive observation and are especially useful in studying the cultural component of the film. While they often will become the basis for discussion, they should only require brief notations so as not to disrupt viewing. The following strategies on the other hand encourage students to speak or write in order to react to a segment they have just seen and frequently can be structured to drill some grammar point.

1. After they have watched a scene, have students mimic the intonation and voice patterns of the actors, or more creatively improvise the situation, substituting their own dialogue for the script, perhaps as a voice-over.
2. Students can practice description (adjectives), narrations (present or past tense), or reported speech by summarizing what they have observed or heard.
3. When characters travel about in the film, students can locate the destinations on a map and then give directions for getting there (imperatives).
4. After viewing an episode students can predict what will happen next (future tense), either as narrative plot summary or by writing their own script.
5. Students can practice commands by giving advice to some character.
6. Introduce a new element into a scene—a strange character or an unexpected event—as a springboard for predictions (*if* clauses).
7. Subtitles are a good introduction to the art of translation. A first task is to compare the actual spoken dialogue to the titles; a more difficult activity involves having students subtitle a section of the film themselves, reminding them of the need for concision, accuracy, and polish.

Any number of other strategies for focused viewing will undoubtedly come to mind as instructors adapt specific films to the needs of their classes. The important point is to maintain student interest by selecting activities that are appropriate to the content of the scene when the film is divided into numerous segments. It can also be useful to explore the richness of a single scene from multiple angles by using one scene as a point of departure for a number of such strategies. Each activity thus reinforces the next one.

Postviewing

During the postviewing phase the close observations made during the course of the preceding sections, along with any supplemental readings into a synthesis of the film, can be expanded and discussed further. Given the difficulty of stimulating meaningful discussion at the intermediate level in the foreign language, the same kind of careful preparation that characterized the first two stages is all the more necessary. Written reports, essays, or film reviews can often be used to prepare students for class discussions and debates. Two techniques are usually effective to guide discussion: (1) a series of closely focused questions that outline the issues the instructor wishes to stress, and (2) true–false statements that address such issues. Students must give illustrations for the true statements and correct the false ones.

Postviewing discussion usually tends to center on two chief topics: either the quality of the film as entertainment or its cultural content. The first deals with how the director handles plot, characterization, and cinematographic technique, whereas the second explores cultural themes in the broader context of more complete information about the topic to determine the viewpoint of the film or to compare it with American culture.

The postviewing phase can lead to spin-off activities that appeal strongly to the imagination and energy of students.

1. Students can imagine themselves to be journalists who have stepped into the setting of the film and write short feature and news articles under such headings as "sports," "fashion," "people," and "classified ads." The issue of the local newspaper they prepare might include a review of the film.
2. Student guest hosts interview classmates who assume the role of characters in the film and respond to questions, whether directly related to the film or not.

3. Students create and model styles seen in the film and accompany them with a descriptive narrative.
4. A character can be put on trial for some offense, real or imaginary, committed in the film.
5. Students prepare a story outline or a script for a sequel to the film.

Viewing Guides

The handouts, or viewing guides as Lonergan (5) calls them, that students receive provide an apt practical summary of the elements teachers must consider when preparing students for viewing. Such guides will be more or less elaborate, depending on whether students have access to the script and how much class time is being devoted to the movie. For example, materials used for previewing activities should include the following: (1) title, director, actors, and date; (2) the names of characters with brief identifications like family relations and professions; (3) an introduction to plot and setting, especially if students are being shown isolated segments from the film, as well as the vocabulary needed for discussion; (4) vocabulary needed for viewing, in the form of either lists or quotations from the dialogue; and (5) readings from the screenplay or on cultural topics.

Focused viewing guides should contain directions for the short activities geared to segments of the film and can be placed on handouts, on the board, or on an overhead projector. While students watch the entire film they can work through a list of true–false statements without disrupting their enjoyment.

Finally, in postviewing activities, the general topics of discussion should be introduced to students before they view the film. Specific directions for activities are in order here so that students have a clear idea of what is expected of them.

Conclusion

As videocassettes of foreign films become increasingly available, we seem indeed to be on the verge of the VCR Revolution, which will allow teachers to show a larger number of films (and more economically) than in the past and, in so doing, present yet another way to bring students closer to the second language and culture. Unfocused viewing of these feature films, however, will not develop adequately the language and cultural proficiency of the student. Classes prepared for active viewing using the techniques outlined in this article will find these films more enjoyable and will be better able to profit from the linguistic and cultural advantages that films offer. Instructors, on the other hand, will have the satisfaction of having prepared their students for the viewing of feature films in ways that will enable them to participate more actively in a second culture.

Notes

1. Our suggestions for dealing with culture are aimed chiefly at observing surface aspects. For suggestions on studying other aspects in more depth see Carr (1).
2. Konrad (4) discusses the technical side of video and lists addresses for buying cassettes, service, and equipment.

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8

Foreign Languages in the Middle School: Exploration, Enrollment, Excellence

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Throughout the United States many school districts have been reorganizing their structures by replacing the traditional junior high school with a new phenomenon—the middle school. Although the organizational pattern of middle schools varies, the most common includes the sixth grade as a part of the middle school and moves the ninth grade to the high school. This new structure raises, therefore, the question of what to do about foreign languages in the middle school. The answers vary greatly. Some districts have kept their foreign language programs as they are, while others have chosen to exclude foreign language instruction from that level. Other districts have incorporated changes in the foreign language program so that it might better meet the needs of the younger student. These changes have included beginning foreign language instruction in grade six or seven, while at the same time adapting to the learning styles and needs of the younger learner. Other school systems have elected to implement a foreign language exploration course in which the students get a "taste" of several languages and cultures. The rationale for the latter includes the belief that middle school is the time for exploration of many learning areas rather than in-depth study of one subject. The Upper Arlington City Schools in Upper Arlington, Ohio, implemented such a plan in 1983.

Exploring Foreign Languages

The creation of the Foreign Language Survey Course in Upper Arlington did not come about overnight. It was part of a five-year plan that reorganized the entire district. Because a limited amount has been written about foreign language exploration at the middle school level, the staff needed to rely on its own experience, creativity, and expertise in order to create the survey course.[1] The purpose of this paper is to share the experiences of these foreign language teachers with interested colleagues—especially those who anticipate similar changes in their programs, or wish to modify existing programs.

The reorganization of a school district from the traditional elementary–junior high–high school format to one that includes a grades-six-to-eight middle school is a complex process. In 1978, the Upper Arlington Board of Education initiated the planning for reorganization by forming committees that wrote the philosophy and goals of the program. The philosophy stated in part that the school should provide opportunities that encourage exploration and that it should sustain a climate of vitality and compassion where students feel secure and supported when they encounter difficulties. The next year the curriculum design committee was formed in order to write the design for the grades-six-to-eight curriculum. As the committee began to work on this task, it faced some decisions about foreign language. The original foreign language program began with level one of French, German, and Spanish in the eighth grade. Ohio had not yet established state standards for middle schools, complicating the process of deciding the role of foreign language learning at this level. The committee decided to work within the elementary minimum standards for grade six and secondary standards for grades seven to eight, speculating that middle school standards would be similar. The standards required that a certain amount of time be set aside in grade six for reading. In order to include reading, existing class periods would be shortened, adding an extra period to the school day. This reading period would make it impossible to begin foreign language instruction in the sixth grade but opened a similar block of time where it could start in grade seven. A question still remained: What kind of foreign language class would best meet the needs of the middle level learner? This question needed to be considered in the context, not only of goals of the program, but also of community standards for education.

The Upper Arlington Schools serve a community of well-educated, upper middle class professionals near Columbus, Ohio. The community is very supportive of the schools and students are highly motivated. Surveys show that 94 percent of the graduates of Upper Arlington High School go on to some form of higher education. What impact does this have on the foreign language instruction? Although increasing enrollment is a goal in most foreign language programs, a healthy 78 percent of these high school students were already enrolled in foreign language classes. From the point of view of the foreign language department, increasing enrollment and interest in foreign language classes was very important; however, equally important was having the opportunity to dispel some of the myths about foreign languages. In the past, students had told teachers that they had chosen a language based on rumors about the difficulty of the language, popularity of the teacher, or the arbitrary decision of which language was "cool." This seemingly random selection of a language gave rise to three goals for the foreign language survey course: (1) to help students decide whether they should take a foreign language in grade eight; (2) to help students make a more informed choice about which language they would elect; and (3) to dispel myths and prejudices about foreign language. A fourth goal was later added—relating foreign languages to other content areas using an interdisciplinary approach. The committee decided that a foreign language survey course would meet these goals. Every seventh grader would be required to explore nine weeks each of French, German, and Spanish in rotation. The fourth nine weeks would be spent in a reading course not taught by the foreign language teachers.

An Interdisciplinary Approach

Once the decision was made to include foreign language exploration as part of the seventh grade curriculum, the foreign language teachers began to write the content of the course. Each language course was designed as an interdisciplinary class to be team-taught with the teachers of the other four seventh-grade academic areas—social studies, science, English, and mathematics. In Upper Arlington, the middle school students are divided into groups called "houses" (about eighty students in one house), and those students have the same four teachers, called house teachers, for their academic subjects. Although foreign language teachers were not accustomed to a team structure with other academic areas, the new design required a great deal of cooperation between the foreign language teachers and the house teachers. After considering several possibilities, the entire teaching team decided that the most practical approach was for the house teachers to teach one day each week—relating their individual learning areas to each target language and culture. Each house teacher would direct the activity in English and would rotate at two-week intervals among the languages. Students would remain in each language for the entire nine weeks. The purpose of the house teacher's involvement was to demonstrate that foreign language study reaches beyond the foreign language class and relates to many other facets of our lives.

Because, unlike other foreign language courses at this level, the exploratory course is required of every seventh grader, the criteria of the course are different and include the following components:

1. The major emphasis of the course is oral communication.
2. Vocabulary is limited to high-frequency expressions and phrases as well as categories such as food, clothing, colors, numbers, animals, family, school, personal interests, sports, and games.
3. Abstract words and phrases are only presented as they are needed for communication. Grammar is limited to very basic concepts with every effort to avoid verb conjugations.
4. Culture forms a significant portion of the content and includes mostly high-interest items such as food, music, gestures, and animal sounds.
5. Every day the class includes a game, song, puzzle, or other "fun" activity.
6. The course content is easy enough so that every student can experience some success and have a positive experience in the class.

After finishing the first draft copies of each language course, the foreign language teachers at Jones Middle School received permission to pilot the foreign language survey course with one group of seventh graders and their house teachers. The pilot was an abbreviated version of the course and lasted only six weeks per language instead of nine. This gave the teachers the opportunity to revise materials before the next nine weeks.

Designing the materials for the course was a challenge. The foreign language and house teachers met several times during the summer and worked individually for many hours creating packets for student and teacher use. The foreign language teachers designed student packets about thirty-five to forty pages long. These materials included visuals, dialogues, communicative activities, and simple exercises. Some of the packets included visuals copied (with permission) from level one materials currently in use in the school. Other parts of the packets contained computer-generated puzzles and word-finds, while still others were the teachers' own original ideas. As they created the packet, the teachers began to formulate lesson plans and simple quizzes to use with them.

While the foreign language teachers were preparing these packets, the house teachers were designing materials for their own learning areas. These sample activities illustrate how foreign languages are integrated with other content areas.[2]

Science

1. The teacher assigns students to spend one class period reading an article of their choice from *National Geographic* (each student reads a different article) about a country or region where the target language is spoken. During the next two class periods that the students meet with the house teacher, they share what they have learned from their articles.
2. Students research cookbooks from around the world and choose recipes from regions where the target language is spoken. They share their recipes and discuss why certain ingredients are prevalent and what nutritional value the recipes have. Students then have the option of preparing and bringing in a sample of the food for the class to try.
3. Students are taken to the learning center where they conduct

research about scientists or scientific discoveries dealing with the target country.

4. At the end of the entire rotation, students hold a mock debate of the United Nations in which they play the roles of representatives of many different countries and discuss fishing rights and maritime boundaries.

English

1. Students are provided with a list of English words whose derivations are from the target language and a list of their original meanings and are asked to match the two lists. They then look up the words in a dictionary to check their guesses and write the current meaning of each word. In order to be able to complete this activity successfully, one must use dictionaries that give the language of origin and the old meaning in that language.
2. The teacher reads a poem to the class. The selection includes words in the target language, and the students try to pick them out and guess what they mean. They also discuss the cultural aspects of the poem. For example, the Spanish teacher selected a poem written by a young person from Spanish Harlem.
3. The teacher reads aloud a short story that includes some aspect of the target culture or that takes place in the target country. The class then discusses the cultural material in the story.

Social Studies

1. Students study a map of the United States and geographic locations whose names are in the target language. The class then discusses where these places are clustered and what historical events led to these clusterings.
2. Students measure distances between the United States and the target culture on a world map. They then discuss what these distances mean in terms of ease of travel, available transportation, and the length of time travel to that country would take.
3. The teacher asks students where they plan to go for a certain holiday and they measure the distance on a map of the United

States. They then go to a map of the target culture and measure the same distance from a major city to another city or area. Students are often surprised that the trip they had planned for the United States may be as far as a trip from Madrid to Moscow! This information leads to discussions of various matters (e.g., perceptions of fuel consumption and waste in the United States).

4. Students can also calculate the population density of the United States and that of the target culture based on information about the populations and surface areas that the teacher provides. Discussions can focus on the implications that these figures have for housing, farming, availability of natural resources, etc.

Math

1. Students simulate a real-life activity that involves buying and selling (e.g., moving to a new home, buying supplies for a party, buying a new outfit, buying a new car or bicycle). They must look in the newspaper for the current rate of exchange of foreign money. Using the ads in the same newspaper, they calculate the prices using the monetary units of the target country.
2. Students plan an imaginary trip by car across Europe and calculate mileage (in metrics), time, and cost.

Student and Program Evaluation

Following each nine-week segment of the rotation, students receive a grade in the foreign language survey course. The grade is based on participation, attitude, quiz grades, and homework. There are daily homework assignments that consist of exercises, puzzles, or communicative activities that rarely take more than five minutes to complete. Whenever the student has to write out answers, all the words are nearby for copying so that students do not have to spell from memory. In addition, a few long-range assignments can be given. For an example, students may make a family tree on which they label the members of their families in the target language—they may draw each member or may cut pictures out of magazines. In another project, students are given a list of items in the target language (e.g., a red dress, a tall man, a blond boy, something to eat) and are provided with magazines. They then go on a "treasure hunt," looking for the items on the list. Working in pairs, they can cut and paste pictures of their treasures and make a collage.

Quizzes are short and simple and include a listening and written section. The listening section usually consists of multiple-choice items or true–false statements. The written part of the quiz is also a multiple-choice format (matching or fill-in), along with simple communicative questions for the students to answer. Again, any word the student needs to spell is found somewhere on the quiz.

Students in the survey course are asked to write their opinions and evaluation of the course in the form of an informal letter to the teacher. Although some students admit that they are nervous about studying three languages, many agree that they soon relax and enjoy the course. Their comments are positive and indicate that they feel the survey course is fun and exciting because it is different from their other coursework. Many seem surprised to find that learning a foreign language can be an easy and pleasant experience. Students seem particularly interested in learning about the foreign culture and comparing it to their own. Parent comments at open houses and on progress report forms generally indicate approval of the course and indicate that they would have welcomed similar foreign language experiences while in school. Even sixth-grade students are excited to find out that they will soon be learning foreign languages.

The Foreign Language Survey Course in Upper Arlington middle schools is successful for several reasons. It provides an inviting, yet challenging, course for students in a community that values excellence in education and opportunity for growth. It provides students with a positive first experience in foreign language and starts their formal study of language in the eighth grade with a solid base. The students have become used to the idea of comparing other cultures with their own and with saying strange sounds and sentences. They can begin their first year of foreign language study knowing the teacher and what he/she expects and feeling comfortable with the language. Because the eighth grade language course is identical to the one offered students at the high school, such an arrangement can provide those eighth graders with a taste of what a high school course will be. It thus acts as a bridge between the middle school and high school curriculum. Students can receive high school credit for the eighth grade course after securing the twenty credits needed for graduation. Those who begin first year language in the eighth grade may elect to take five years of a language before graduation. A longer sequence such as this enables them to be in a good position to earn proficiency credits in the foreign language at a college or university. Over 90 percent of the eighth grade class at Jones Middle School decides that foreign language will be a part of its school day. It is the "in" thing to take a foreign language.

Building and Maintaining Enrollment

The Foreign Language Survey provides the perfect setting for building enrollment. Students are involved in a positive learning experience and are eager to continue language study. The language teachers spend time with each of their classes discussing which countries speak the languages and reasons each language might be appropriate for individual students. Students and parents alike appreciate this information. Discussions take place in an informal, frank, and matter-of-fact way, and teachers attempt to be objective and detached from the students' language selection process.

Because so much of the vocabulary and structure in the Foreign Language Survey involves communicating about personal preferences, family and school, the foreign language teachers get to know their students and use this opportunity to establish a good rapport with their seventh graders. Commitment to middle-level learners and knowledge of their unique needs and personal interests are important. In addition, fast-paced activities that are geared to be fun and yet provide language practice keep the students as active participants in the learning process. Because the structure of the Foreign Language Survey is different from other classes, this novelty works to the advantage of the program.

Staff continuity also contributes to increasing enrollments. The composition of the middle school language staff has been stable for many years, which enables the teachers to establish a reputation and to work with several children from the same family. In addition, students are secure in knowing who their language teachers will be the following year. At the middle school level such knowledge can be very important.

Because such a high percentage of Upper Arlington graduates go on to college, most realize early that language study will be a part of the requirements for entrance. In addition, the Upper Arlington High School requires two credits of foreign language or vocational courses for graduation. The level one classes at the middle schools count toward this requirement. These requirements offer a built-in assurance that most students will eventually enroll in foreign language.

Building and maintaining enrollment, therefore, requires a combination of personal and professional investment and commitment on the part of the staff—along with community interest and support from the policy-makers in the district.

Establishing Excellence

With the current emphasis on excellence in education, one might wonder what factors contribute to a successful program. The Upper Arlington Schools serve a community that values education, and because of the demographics of the community, there is a built-in demand that students be prepared for college, business, and travel. The close proximity of The Ohio State University makes it easier for teachers to keep up with current trends in the profession. This combination of support from the community and the university is an important element in achieving excellence.

In addition, a great deal of value is placed on academic as well as athletic competition and achievement. The foreign language program at Jones Middle School is one area in which gifted students have the opportunity to attain their highest potential at the middle school level. Every year, a team of students is formed from each language area—each team works independently to compete in the National Examinations of French, German, and Spanish. The French and Spanish teams also compete in the Ohio Tests of Scholastic Achievement. Under the teacher's supervision, the team works ahead of the class on grammar and culture. Because these students are highly motivated and have demonstrated language aptitude, it is often possible to cover the grammar and vocabulary for the second semester by the end of the first semester at practice sessions held before or after school or during lunch. Teachers receive a supplementary contract for this work—just as an athletic coach does. Often, after the competition is over, some students will choose to continue working with the team through the spring and summer, which enables them to move from level one to level three the following year.

Within the structure of the foreign language program academic excellence is achieved and maintained—partly because of the strong and effective leadership of the foreign language coordinator and partly because of the common belief of the teachers that coordination and articulation of the program are essential for its success. Teachers meet districtwide and agree on the minimum amount of material that they hope to cover. The language coordinator monitors progress throughout the year to ensure that goals are being met. Teachers often share materials—both within the building and throughout the district. Sharing and communication among staff members are essential elements in the coordination of the program. It should also be noted that the foreign language teachers are working in this program by choice, not by chance and by mandate.

The house teachers involved in the course also contribute significantly to its success. They are open to new ideas and to experimenting with them. They are very supportive of the foreign language teachers and the program and put in many extra hours of work. When not actually teaching, they remain in class as "students" and participate enthusiastically in discussions and activities. Their open and supportive attitude creates a positive influence on the students.

The Ohio State University places many students in the Upper Arlington Schools for field experience and student teaching. The presence of these preservice teachers and their supervisors is beneficial to the language program because it provides an opportunity to keep up with new trends in foreign language education. The availability of these students to work in language classes allows for more individualization and flexibility.

Administrative support is another major factor in the program's success. Because the foreign language teachers have earned a positive reputation in the community, administrators have been extremely supportive. The building principal has given invaluable help in scheduling teachers involved in the course at the same time so that they can work together. Furthermore, he has publicly praised the program, its teachers, and its students. He invites teachers to attend any school function that will increase their visibility in a positive way and encourages them to publicize language-related events in the community newspaper. The Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum has also been helpful and has provided funds for inservice and summer work. Members of the Board of Education have also been supportive. This support has come about as a result of the reputation the program has established.

Conclusion

The middle school program described in this article includes goals of exploration of a foreign language, building enrollment, and developing a program marked by excellence. It is the authors' belief that these goals have been reached. Exploration of language and culture is achieved through the Foreign Language Survey Course with its interdisciplinary focus. Enrollments are built and increased by careful counseling and public relations activities and with the support of students, teachers, administrators, and the community. Finally, excellence has been achieved through a long and involved process requiring competence, commitment, and unity of educational goals.

Notes

1. For recent articles containing information about middle school language programs, see Kay Thorp, "A Middle School Exploratory Course," pp. 26–33 in Patricia B. Westphal, ed., *Strategies for Foreign Language Teaching: Communication, Technology, Culture*, Report of the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co., 1984), and Lael Littlefield and Rafael Grenier, "The Exploratory Wheel: A Foreign Language Program for the Middle School" in this volume.
2. Additional ideas for interdisciplinary activities can be found in Miriam Met, et al., "Elementary School Foreign Language," pp. 18–21 in Robert G. Mead, ed., *Foreign Languages: Key Links in the Chain of Learning*, Report of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (Middlebury, VT: Northeast Conference, 1983).

9

The Exploratory Wheel: A Foreign Language Program for the Middle School

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The concept of the Exploratory Wheel for sixth-grade students was developed by the teachers and administrative staff who designed the Marion Community Schools' Middle School curriculum. State guidelines and requirements leave little room in the student's day for enrichment or elective studies. While we may hope to see the day when learning another language will be as routine for all students as learning to multiply and divide or studying the Civil War, that day has not yet arrived in Marion, Indiana. However, the concept of the Exploratory Wheel does expose every student to various facets of language learning and to the importance of language as a means of communication.

The Exploratory Wheel has four segments or spokes: Home Economics, Industrial Arts, Computer Literacy, and Foreign Language. All sixth grade students in each of the three middle schools are divided into four groups. Each of the four spoke areas is studied by one group at a time and these groups are rotated like a wheel. Each spoke is nine weeks long and introduces students to four different curricular areas that they will have the opportunity to select later in the middle school experience. Each nine weeks, the student moves to a new spoke on the Wheel. With only nine weeks of study, the scope of the course must be confined to what is practical and possible to accomplish within the time limit.

The Foreign Language Wheel

The Foreign Language Wheel was designed by the foreign language teachers of Marion County Schools under the direction of the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and Director of Secondary Schools.[1] The course is not meant to be a formal introduction to the language but rather an experience that will build a readiness for learning a language at a later time. In this school district, later means that a student may presently complete level one of French, German, or Spanish by electing one semester in the seventh grade and two semesters in the eighth, thus completing the first level of a language before entering the ninth grade. Students who begin their language study in the seventh grade can continue through a five-year sequence.

Although the developers of the course do not pretend to have written a perfect course, the product represents a workable guide that can be taught by teachers with a great diversity of experience, skills, and personal preference, while at the same time providing learning experiences that are consistently similar or equal in concept. In fact, staff members who have taught the course have made adaptations or have developed alternative activities to supplement or replace those contained in the original course materials. This process of evolution and modification of materials is viewed as a positive response to the differing needs and interests of individual teachers and students.

As a starting point, the following program goals were determined. These objectives were then used to develop the teacher's guide and student activities.

1. To explore similarities among languages and develop a greater awareness of English words and expressions derived from other languages.
2. To develop an understanding of some career and life situations in which the knowledge of a foreign language would be of value.
3. To broaden the student's cultural awareness and build an understanding of the similarities and differences in various cultures.
4. To motivate an interest in future language study.
5. To establish a familiarity with the language learning process.
6. To improve study skills, listening skills, and vocabulary.

7. To foster a positive attitude toward and appreciation for others whose cultural background differs from one's own.

Introductions to actual language learning experiences were based on the three modern languages taught in our school system—French, German, and Spanish. The course includes short one-week units and longer two-week units in each language. The short units are referred to in the guide as Nonbuilding Language, and the longer units as Building Language, on the assumption that one teacher would teach all of the sections at any one school. The French teacher will teach one week of Nonbuilding Spanish and German and two weeks of Building French in one school; in another school the Spanish teacher includes Nonbuilding French and German and Building Spanish. Building Language indicates that the teacher is teaching the languages in which he or she has been trained; nonbuilding refers to a language that the teacher may not know or knows less well.

How then does a German teacher manage to teach French and Spanish, and a Spanish teacher teach French and German? Operating upon the premise that we learn at least what we expect our students to learn, we share with the students that this language is something that we are all going to learn about together. Tapes have been prepared to model the few short utterances used in the course and the teacher becomes a student with the rest of the class. Students can accept that a teachers does not know everything without losing respect for the teacher's authority in the classroom. They can appreciate that a teacher who expects *them* to learn is also able to learn.

In spite of the overall success of the program, some problems have arisen. For example, an ongoing difficulty for the staff is that they are not assigned to a permanent room that allows for rearranging furniture or for creating the "cultural island" that would provide a more intense immersion experience for the student. A lack of available audiovisual equipment necessary for implementing activities suggested in the lesson plans has also been problematic. Although these problems are not insurmountable, teachers planning similar programs should enlist a commitment from school administrators to provide necessary space and equipment.

The Teacher's Guide

Although the compiled teacher's course guide seems overwhelming, it was important to the staff to provide such complete suggestions, lesson plans, and useful background information that a first-year teacher just out of college would be able to teach the course. Most teachers have textbooks, travel experiences in countries where the target language is spoken, classroom expertise developed through years of trial and error, and materials and realia. A first-year teacher, however, could conceivably enter the Wheel classroom without materials or textbooks. Much of the material in the guide's appendix sections is not intended for student use, but as research and source material to familiarize the teacher with the concepts to be taught. The completeness of the course guide and the explicit directions found in it are not meant to inhibit the teacher's creativity but to provide an initial basis for confidence. It is not intended to restrict teachers from drawing upon their own experience and expertise, but rather to be a source of strengthening the developing of those qualities.

Keeping in mind that all sixth grade students take this course and that there is no ability groupings, the lesson plans attempt to include simple activities understandable to the slowest students and suggestions for optional activities that challenge the gifted. Quizzes and tests were developed with consideration of the same opposite ends of the spectrum. Building in success experiences for the slow or nonmotivated student, while stretching and challenging the student with the quick, inquiring mind, continues to be a concern to the teachers in this program.

Scope and Sequence

The Wheel course is based on the following scope and sequence, which represents eight weeks of instruction, allowing one week's time for interruptions or for more time on any unit as needed.

Week 1	Unit I:	Word Borrowing and Foreign Language in Indiana
Week 2	Unit II:	Nonverbal Communication
Week 3	Unit III:	Animal and Human Communication
	Unit IV:	Getting a Passport
Week 4	Units V, VII, or IX:	Nonbuilding Language

Week 5 Units V, VII, or IX: Nonbuilding Language
Week 6 Units VI, VIII, or X: Building Language
Week 7 Units VI, VIII, or X: Continue Building Language
Week 8 Unit XI: Languages of the World in the World of Your Future

Although the preliminary exercises in recognizing various aspects of communicative means and skills before introducing actual language learning experiences seemed logical, students expressed consistently some impatience and eagerness to experience actual foreign language Teachers, therefore, experimented with changing the order of the units, interspersing the Nonbuilding Units of one week throughout the others, but ending with the two-week Building Language Unit (a more extensive immersion experience) and the Languages of the World Unit. This sequence seems to be more successful in maintaining student interest and enthusiasm.

The unit entitled "Word Borrowing and Foreign Languages" draws the student's attention to the rich and varied ethnic background of the state of Indiana. A map study of town and city names points out the nationality pockets that developed as ethnic groups built their own communities. Students are asked to think of things they use and foods they eat that come from another culture.

In the unit on nonverbal communication, activities help students become aware of ways in which we communicate other than through words or sounds. They work with gestures and learn that some gestures may send out different signals in different cultures and also that other nonverbal signs are universal.

The "Animal and Human Communication" unit explores the basic need of living creatures to communicate. The students discuss ways that animals communicate with humans and with each other. They are introduced to concepts of "talking drums," of sign language, of written communication, and of transmitting messages.

Before the French or Spanish Nonbuilding Units, the one-day lesson unit on "Getting a Passport" should be taught. Students are asked to complete a simulated passport so that they learn about passport procedures, why they are necessary, and how they are used. The students may use an actual photograph, a magazine picture of a favorite star, sports figure, or other well-known person, or they may draw their "photograph." Some students enjoy embellishing the form and are very creative in producing their passports. These passports are kept by students who use them in subsequent language units.

Trip formats are used as the primary activity format of both the one- and two-week language units, whether Building Language or Nonbuilding Language components. The two-week units contain additional enrichment activities (e.g., continental breakfasts or shopping trips) and provide more opportunity for language practice. The French and Spanish programs take imaginary trips to Paris and Madrid; one Spanish teacher has included a short visit to Mexico City before proceeding to Madrid because the most likely source of contacts for most students will be Mexicans or Mexican-Americans. The German unit introduces the student to West Germany rather than concentrating on a major city.

The French student materials for this unit are principally presented in a class set of booklets that the students do not keep. Spanish students, on the other hand, are instructed to save all handouts for the unit so that they have a completed booklet that they are allowed to keep. A checklist is provided in the teacher's guide for evaluating the completed notebook of the student.

Each language unit also includes a set of slides showing the places visited and lists other audiovisual aids—films, filmstrips, and videotapes that help bring these places to life for the student. Packets of realia at each building, which include real (expired) passports, airline tickets, subway tickets, bus tickets, etc., also lend an air of realism to the unit.

To begin the unit, students must first pass through customs where the teacher acts as the customs agent or appoints a student to do so. The passports prepared in the previous unit are stamped; students who forget to bring their passports may be confined to "immigration," a corner of the room, for the remainder of the class period.

After this initial introduction to the country in question, students complete a variety of learning activities. The Spanish materials include, for example, a blackline facsimile of an airline ticket to Madrid from New York City's Kennedy Airport. The lesson plan calls for a preflight briefing during which students ask for words or phrases that they think they might need to know (e.g., Where is the restaurant? Where is the restroom? How much does it cost?). Also included in the Spanish materials are copies of a description of the student's trip to Madrid in

English, but with basic Spanish vocabulary words included such as food items, meals, monetary terms.

Short, simple dialogues are also included in each of the language units and are recorded on tape for classroom use. The simplicity of the dialogues, as illustrated by the French example below, is in keeping with the exploratory nature of the program. Students can learn the vocabulary in these dialogues without difficulty and can learn to pronounce the words without undue frustration.

Greeting Dialogue. Write the dialogue below on the board. Teach the students the handshake that goes with the greeting. Discuss with the students the information about French greetings in the appendix.

Student 1: Bonjour, Monsieur. (Mademoiselle, Madame)
Student 2: Bonjour, Monsieur. Ça va?
Student 1: Oui, ça va. Merci.
Student 2: Voici l'autobus. Au revoir, Monsieur.
Student 1: Au revoir, Monsieur.

The final unit, *Languages of the World in the World of Your Future*, has the following objectives:

1. To explore the interdependence of countries
2. To explore the commonalities of language
3. To explore the varieties of language and those spoken by large numbers of people
4. To explore the career possibilities where a second language may be a principal or an ancillary skill
5. To explore the ways in which the study of another language can enrich and improve the quality of life

In this final unit, as in all the units, many "hands-on" and activity-centered methods are used. The main emphasis of this unit is to widen the student's focus on the world: how large it is and how widespread its peoples are. Also important is bringing the world closer to the student: how quickly an event in one part of the world can affect our own world; how dependent we are upon other peoples and countries, and they upon us; and how very different we may be, but at the same time, how very alike we are.

Conclusion

This article contains a "bare bones" description of the birth of an exploratory language and culture-oriented course for sixth-grade children. It attempts to be experience-based and activity-oriented, and to provide students with an exciting and unique opportunity to explore various languages. It is not meant to be a blueprint to be followed by any other school system in developing a similar course. Rather, it is hoped that it may simply provide a springboard for the staff of another school system to look at its own situation and consider some of the aspects discussed here. Any good course must be student-oriented, flexible, and adaptable to changing student populations, staff availability, and physical limitations. It must capitalize upon the uniqueness of the school personnel who create it, staff it, and administer it, and, above all, the students who are its audience.

Notes

1. The foreign language teachers are grateful for the competent guidance of Carol Secttor, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent. They also owe a large debt of gratitude to Lorraine Strasheim of Indiana University whose expertise, direction, and suggestions for resources were invaluable in developing and implementing this program.

10

Developing a Latin Curriculum for High School

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Introduction

The purpose of the following paper is to provide a rationale, structure, and method for the development of a Latin curriculum at the high school level, especially for novice Latin teachers who find themselves overwhelmed at the prospect of being appointed "the Latin department." At the outset, a mild disclaimer is necessary. There are many good ways to approach the establishment or modification of a Latin program. The ideas presented below are not offered as the only approach to teaching Latin or necessarily the best; they have, however, been developed over the past twelve years and seem to be logical and useful ways to present material to students.

In planning this Latin curriculum, seven subject-matter goals that help focus the selection of materials and preparation of classroom activities have been identified: (1) understand simple Latin syntax, (2) develop vocabulary skills, (3) develop ability to read and understand a simple passage in Latin, (4) demonstrate an awareness of how Latin has influenced English, (5) understand the institutions, culture, and religion of Roman society, (6) understand the Roman cultural influences on present-day America, and (7) develop ability to pronounce sounds of classical Latin.

In addition to the brief description of these goals that follows they are also given in the appendix with specific instructional objectives. The order of the goals listed above is for Latin I only; emphases change as the student moves from one course to another. It is also important that a balance be maintained between the grammar of the first, second, and third goals, the historical and cultural perspectives of goals four, five, and six, and the daily repetition of Latin as represented in the seventh. Too much grammar and reciting aloud do not allow students a chance to experience the intricacies of Roman roads or the social ritual of the bath. On the other hand, too much indulgence in culture and daily life causes the class to become, not a foreign language class, but a history or humanities class, which should not be the intention of a Latin curriculum.

Teaching Latin I

In addition to striking a balance among the different subject-matter goals, Latin teachers need to be optimistic about their Latin I classes and think of their first-year students as individuals who are going to be in the Latin program for four years. This positive attitude assumes that all students will succeed, allowing gradual selection of those students who can or should continue as appropriate or necessary.

The majority of the Latin I year is spent on grammar (case endings, verb endings, vocabulary, sentence translation, paragraph translation) with occasional activities having to do with art, architecture, roads, food, mythology, sports, etc. There may even be time for an action-packed movie such as *Ben-Hur* or *Spartacus*. It is also important to emphasize Roman cultural influences on modern daily life. The Latin teacher should explain how Latin lives in the world of business, politics, television, books, and magazines. Referring to Pompeian Olive Oil or Appian Way Pizza are only the beginning to exposing students to the many and varied uses of Latin in our culture. "Make it relevant" is not a popular saying today; but that is exactly what the Latin teacher needs to do. Make it relevant because it is relevant.

Thus, the goal of the Latin I teacher is to cover as much grammatical ground as possible, and at the same time convince the student that all of the hard work will result in a recognizable and attainable goal. If the teacher is excited about all the new and different information being set forth, the student cannot help but be excited also. Latin I is probably the most important year because it sets the tone for the entire program. The real and ultimate goal of every secondary Latin teacher is to build a strong Latin program from grades nine through twelve.

Teaching Latin II

In Latin II eight subject matter goals are employed. The only difference between the goals of first- and second-year Latin is one of emphasis and degree. The goals are as follows: (1) understand more complex Latin syntax, (2) extend vocabulary skills, (3) expand ability to read and understand a complex passage, (4) expand ability to pronounce the sounds of classical Latin, (5) demonstrate an increased awareness of how Latin influenced English, (6) expand knowledge of the institutions of ancient Roman society, (7) expand knowledge of Roman cultural influences on present-day America, and (8) understand the historical background of the passages read. In Latin II the study of Latin grammar is completed and students move to the full-fledged reading of the ancient texts.

The traditional vocabulary and syntax review comes at the beginning of the year. Grammatical elements that were not covered in Latin I are addressed. For example, the subjunctive mood is usually taught in Latin II. If possible, Latin reading and grammatical elements are introduced concurrently and class time is divided between the two. This balance of reading and grammar offers a change of pace and variety of class activities. As the year moves on, grammatical exercises are emphasized less and less; grammar is addressed and examined as it exists in readings.

Latin II teachers can use many different readings depending on their text: for example, the tale of Ulysses in Hines (5), Hercules in Jenney (6), Jason and the Argonauts in Ullman (10), Roman Britain in the Cambridge Latin Series (2, 3), and Publius and Furianus also in Ullman (10). These readings accomplish the same goal, i.e., allowing students the opportunity to read some less difficult Latin that employs many of the grammatical rules that they have learned in Latin I. Any reading that accomplishes this goal can be used.

Hand in hand with the reading, the teacher should introduce supplementary material concerning history, archeology, or mythology. For instance, when reading the story of Ulysses the teacher might take the opportunity to make some germane comments from Finley's *World of Odysseus* (4). None of the readings mentioned above should be taught in a vacuum, i.e., strictly for their value in learning the language. They are all relevant to many different disciplines, and can lead teachers into discussions of a wide range of topics, making the Latin class come alive for the students and adding a vibrant and dynamic dimension to the class. The Latin teacher needs to be creative and not be confined by the textbook. If a student has a genuine question about the treatment of women during the Age of Augustus, teachers should try to answer the question or encourage the student to explore this academic question on his or her own and report back to the class. Even the simplest reading can inspire discussion.

By the end of the year it is time to attack Caesar, which is the true baptism for the Latin II student. It is very difficult for some students to go from the comfort of simple memorization of grammatical forms and syntax to reading Latin texts. *Puella aquam portat* is a long way from *Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres*. At this point the Latin teacher must be flexible and realize that not every class is capable of the same type of work from year to year. In addition, Latin is not a required course in most high schools. If teachers are not aware of each group's differences and plan accordingly, they might not have a class the following year. If a class is a little slower than usual, take the time to work carefully with the students. If they are especially bright, push them. There is not necessarily a fixed amount of work that has to be covered by the end of the year. The goal should be to have students enjoy the Latin experience, not to create college Classics majors.

Another good tactic to create interest in the second half of Latin II is a library report on some historical aspect of the Roman Republic. This is a natural lead-in to Caesar's *Commentaries* and also breaks up the monotony of translation and recitation. Ancient historical figures almost always impress high school students. It is hard for them to believe that so much is written about Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus, a man of whom they have never heard.

If all goes well, then, the goal that was established in Latin I will have been met in Latin II, i.e., students are reading Latin from the ancient text. Thus, Latin I and II are a unified whole (one course taught in two years), which results in the production of a Latin reader who has an appreciation of more than just grammatical rules. If the Latin II year has been a successful one, a Latin III class is assured. The first half of the Latin curriculum is over. If students decide not to go on, they have at least a basic background in the study of Latin and its culture.

Teaching Latin III

In many ways, Latin III and Latin IV function as a unified whole, i.e., one course taught in two years. Although one cannot force students to take the fourth-year course, they can be told that taking Latin III without continuing in Latin IV is like eating a fine meal and skipping the dessert. For this author, Latin IV is the dessert of the Latin curriculum. The focus of these two courses is literary and historical rather than grammatical. Although grammar is still important and crucial to the understanding of Latin, grammar at these levels functions more as the means to literary and historical ends. In Latin III, the subject matter goals are as follows: (1) understand complex Latin syntax, (2) extend vocabulary skills, (3) expand ability to read and understand selected passages in Latin, (4) expand ability to pronounce the sounds of classical Latin, (5) become aware of Roman religion as represented in art and literature, (6) expand knowledge of Roman cultural influence on present-day America, (7) understand the historical and literary background of the passages read, and (8) demonstrate an increased awareness of how Latin has influenced English. Again the goals are similar to those already proposed for Latin I and Latin II, but this similarity of goals throughout the Latin program gives the curriculum a firm base from which new ideas can be developed. It is easier to explain what is to be accomplished to those who are not convinced of the worth of Latin or to students who want to know what they will achieve in their study of Latin. The rationale and structure are built into the subject-matter goals and instructional objectives. By being methodical and structured, Latin teachers communicate clearly the goals of their courses.

Sallust, Cicero, and Ovid are the major authors studied in Latin III. The first semester is devoted to the political makeup of the Roman Republic and the significance of Sallust's and Cicero's writings. Of course, the overriding goal is to introduce students to the reading and analysis of Latin texts. They not only learn to translate difficult material, but they also practice critical analysis and interpretation of the text. For example, does Cicero really intend what he says? Why are some words emphasized? Why are some words left out? What is the overall effect of the passage? These are only a few of the questions that are asked when we read critically. Latin III begins to function as a class in the examination of the Roman mind. What was Cicero really thinking 2000 years ago when he wrote the *Catilinarian Orations*?

In the second semester the world of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Apuleius' *Golden Ass* (1), in translation, are explored. The students are eager to do some of Ovid's mythological tales and the reading of Apuleius' ribald tales is always a pleasure. A library project and term paper concerning mystery cults is assigned in connection with the reading of the *Golden Ass*. This ends the school year on an interesting note and keeps the Latin III students enthusiastic about returning for Latin IV.

Teaching Latin IV

The subject-matter goals for Latin IV are identical to those of Latin III. However, the instructional objectives do differ somewhat. (See the appendix for further information on these differences.) The fourth year of Latin should be a culmination of everything the students and teacher have worked for so diligently. The curriculum normally centers on Vergil's *Aeneid* and the Augustan Age. Latin IV students are expected to continue to use the critical thinking and inquiry skills that they learned in Latin III. It is not enough to be able to translate the *Aeneid* only. The students should understand how the *Aeneid* works and why Vergil wrote it.

Brooks Otis (7), Viktor Pörschal (8), and Michael Putnam (9) are only a few of the references available for the Latin teacher. The study of the *Aeneid* can spark political, religious, historical, literary, sociological, and psychological discussions. If students are encouraged to investigate the *Aeneid* on these different levels, they will begin to see that Latin does live on in its impact on Western civilization.

The class should be organized around the daily translation of the *Aeneid*, but this should be a springboard into other areas of discussion. The real quality of the *Aeneid* will then be understood by students: the ability of literature to make people understand themselves and others like them. If students begin to acquire this insight, the class will be a success and students will experience a feeling of accomplishment.

Conclusion

The Latin curriculum outlined above presents a four-year sequence of courses with specific objectives and interrelated goals that change in emphasis as the student progresses through the program. The learning of Latin grammar and vocabulary is not seen as an end in and of itself but as preparation for reading ancient texts. In addition to the language and reading goals described, it should also be noted that the program widens the students' ability to think and gives them intimate contact with the ancient world. This program is a course of study in the Classics, and one that is deeply rooted in the Humanities. It is the cornerstone of a civilized education.

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Appendix

Latin I
Subject-Matter Goals and Instructional Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Understand Latin syntax
   - A. Distinguish between Latin and English morphology
   - B. Distinguish declarative, interrogative, and imperative statements
   - C. Determine the meaning of simple statements
   - D. Determine the meaning of increasingly longer passages
2. Develop vocabulary skills
   - A. Recognize the meanings of words from Latin to English and English to Latin
   - B. Recognize English derivatives
   - C. Recognize Latin root words
3. Develop ability to read and understand a simple Latin passage
   - A. Recognize the written symbols of previously learned words
   - B. Determine the meaning of a simple sentence using previously learned vocabulary and grammar in new combinations
4. Demonstrate an awareness of how Latin has influenced English
   - A. Recognize Latin syntax in common English usage
   - B. Recognize Latin root words in English derivatives
   - C. Recognize Latin prefixes and suffixes in English usage
5. Understand the institutions, culture, and religion of ancient Roman society
   - A. Explain and discuss family relationships
   - B. Explain and discuss daily activities
   - C. Explain and discuss foods
   - D. Explain and discuss holidays
   - E. Explain and discuss Roman art and architecture
   - F. Explain and discuss Roman mythology
6. Understand the Roman cultural influences on present-day America
   - A. Compare and contrast family relationships
   - B. Compare and contrast daily activities
   - C. Compare and contrast foods

   D. Compare and contrast holidays
   E. Compare and contrast artistic styles
   F. Recognize Roman mythological elements in American culture
7. Develop ability to pronounce the sounds of classical Latin
   A. Repeat Latin phonemes
   B. Repeat Latin words with proper stress

Latin II
Subject-Matter Goals and Instructional Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Understand more complex syntax
   A. Recognize all the declensions and conjugations
   B. Determine the meaning of simple and complex sentences
   C. Recognize the person, number, tense, voice, and mood of Latin verbs
2. Extend vocabulary skills
   A. Recognize the meanings of words from Latin to English
   B. Recognize English derivatives
   C. Recognize Latin root words
3. Expand ability to read and understand a complex Latin passage
   A. Recognize the written symbols of previously learned words
   B. Determine the meaning of complex sentences using previously learned vocabulary and grammar in new combinations
4. Expand ability to pronounce the sounds of classical Latin
   A. Repeat Latin phonemes
   B. Repeat Latin words with proper stress
   C. Read aloud long prose passages
5. Demonstrate an increased awareness of how Latin influenced English
   A. Recognize Latin syntax in common English usage
   B. Recognize Latin root words in English derivatives
   C. Recognize Latin prefixes and suffixes in English usage
6. Expand knowledge of the institutions of ancient Roman society, culture, and religion
   A. Explain and discuss family relationships
   B. Explain and discuss daily activities
   C. Explain and discuss foods

   - D. Explain and discuss holidays
   - E. Explain and discuss Roman art and architecture
   - F. Explain and discuss Roman mythology
7. Expand knowledge of Roman cultural influences on present-day America
   - A. Compare and contrast family relationships
   - B. Compare and contrast daily activities
   - C. Compare and contrast foods
   - D. Compare and contrast holidays
   - E. Compare and contrast artistic styles
   - F. Recognize Roman mythological elements in American culture
8. Understand the historical background of the passages read
   - A. Examine the Roman monarchy and the republic
   - B. Examine the Gallic Wars according to Caesar

Latin III

Subject-Matter Goals and Instructional Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Understand complex Latin syntax
   - A. Recognize stylistic differences of selected authors
   - B. Determine the meaning of complex passages
   - C. Recognize the syntax and morphology of Latin grammar
2. Extend vocabulary skills
   - A. Recognize the meanings of words from Latin to English
   - B. Recognize English derivatives
   - C. Recognize Latin root words and their frequentatives
3. Expand ability to read and understand selected passages
   - A. Determine the meaning of complex passages using previously learned vocabulary in new combinations
   - B. Interpret selections from Golden Age literature
   - C. Interpret selections from Silver Age literature
4. Expand ability to pronounce the sounds of classical Latin
   - A. Read aloud a long prose passage with the proper intonation
   - B. Read aloud epic poetry using the correct meter
   - C. Read aloud Latin love elegy using the correct meter
5. Become aware of Roman religion as represented in art and literature

   A. Recognize different aspects of Roman public and private religion
   B. Identify the influence of the gods in both the Golden and Silver Ages of literature
   C. Recognize the influence of Mystery Cults on Roman religion
6. Expand knowledge of Roman cultural influences on present-day America
   A. Explain the effect of political institutions
   B. Explain the effect of Mystery Cults on Christianity
   C. Explain the effects of Stoicism and Epicureanism
7. Understand the historical and literary background of passages read
   A. Explain the effect of the Republic on Roman history
   B. Explain the importance of Golden Age literature
8. Demonstrate an increased awareness of how Latin has influenced English
   A. Recognize Latinate styles of writing
   B. Recognize Latin root words in English derivatives
   C. Examine and react to a 20th century Latin periodical

Latin IV
Subject-Matter Goals and Instructional Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Understand complex Latin syntax
   A. Recognize stylistic differences of selected authors and works
   B. Determine the meaning of complex and detailed works
   C. Recognize the syntax and morphology of Latin grammar
2. Extend vocabulary skills
   A. Recognize the meanings of words from Latin to English
   B. Recognize English derivatives
   C. Recognize Latin root words and their frequentatives
3. Expand ability to read and understand selected works in Latin
   A. Determine the meaning of complex passages using previously learned vocabulary in new combinations
   B. Interpret works from Golden Age literature
   C. Interpret works from Silver Age literature
4. Expand ability to pronounce the sounds of classical Latin
   A. Read aloud a long prose passage with the proper intonation

   - B. Read aloud epic poetry using the correct meter
   - C. Read aloud Latin love elegy using the correct meter
5. Become aware of Roman government and politics as represented by Latin authors
   - A. Recognize the influence of Roman oratory on Roman politics
   - B. Recognize the importance of Roman political institutions
   - C. Recognize the influence of the works of Cicero
6. Expand knowledge of Roman cultural influences on present-day America
   - A. Explain the effect of the art of persuasion
   - B. Explain how Christianity changed the Roman Empire
   - C. Explain the philosophy of Seneca and Marcus Aurelius
7. Understand the historical and literary background of works read
   - A. Explain the effect of the Empire on Roman history
   - B. Explain the influence of Vergil's *Aeneid* on Latin literature
   - C. Explain the importance of Silver Age literature
8. Demonstrate an increased awareness of how Latin has influenced English
   - A. Recognize Latinate styles of writing
   - B. Recognize Latin root words in English derivatives
   - C. Examine and react to a 20th century Latin periodical

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